Defining the Personal Health Record

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AHIMA Releases Definition, Attributes of Consumer Health Record

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The personal health record (PHR) will play a key role in the move to a safer, more efficient, consumer-driven US healthcare system. It will be a valuable asset to individuals and families, enabling them to integrate and manage their healthcare information using secure, standardized tools.

It is imperative that patients, healthcare providers, and payers work together to develop a PHR model. There is no single pathway to a universal PHR, but establishing a common data set is a vital starting point.[1] In January 2005 AHIMA launched an e-HIMTM work group to examine the role of the PHR in the electronic health record. The work group included HIM and industry leaders as well as AHIMA staff.

Based on research of the activity currently taking place within the healthcare industry, the work group formulated a definition of the PHR that included attributes, common data elements, emerging HIM roles, and consumer education and tools to promote its use. Shown here are the first highlights of that work: a definition of the PHR, its attributes, and a description and partial list of data elements. The group's complete report will be published as a practice brief in the July–August issue of the *Journal*.

Definition of the PHR

The personal health record (PHR) is an electronic, lifelong resource of health information needed by individuals to make health decisions. Individuals own and manage the information in the PHR, which comes from healthcare providers and the individual. The PHR is maintained in a secure and private environment, with the individual determining rights of access. The PHR does not replace the legal record of any provider.

Attributes of the PHR

The following attributes describe more completely the ideal PHR:

Functionality

- Aids the transition from paper to electronic record-keeping
- Allows the individual to refill prescriptions electronically
- Addresses the major issues of health literacy skills (reading and writing) in the context of culture and language
- Allows selective retrieval and formatting of information by individuals or agents
- Is portable (remains with the individual)
- Helps the individual organize personal health information
- Educates the individual about personal health information
- Assists the individual with decision making and health management and wellness (e.g., reminders of health activities, health risk assessments, and public health and patient safety alerts)
- Is flexible and expandable to support evolving health needs of the individual and family

Format and Content

- Dynamic record that is continuously updated
- Standard format is electronic
- Incorporates paper documents and other media formats

- Linked with, or contains copies of, provider's legal or electronic records
- Original and immediate source of information is identifiable
- Includes dates of entry and occurrence of all information
- Contains lifelong health information
- Not considered a complete record
- Not restricted by any one format
- Not the legal record or electronic health record of a provider
- Not restricted by culture or language
- Providers use their professional judgment, as they do with any patient-supplied history, for clinical decision support or health management of the individual

Privacy Access and Control

- Private and secure
- Controlled by the individual
- Accessible any place and time by individual
- Accessible in an emergency
- Individual has primary responsibility for the information

Maintenance and Security

- Audit trail shows what information was viewed, by whom, and when
- Amendable by original source as a means of maintaining record integrity
- Individual decides what is incorporated into his or her record

Interoperability

- Achieves easy, accurate, and consistent exchange with others by using communication and health vocabulary standards
- Standard-driven to support evolving health information technology
- Supports structured data collection from individual and stores information using a defined vocabulary
- Links to supportive educational, management, productivity, and quality knowledge bases

Common Data Elements of the PHR

In order for consumers to use the PHR in different care settings and with different providers, it must contain common data elements. A recommended description and partial list is shown at left in the table "Common Data Elements." Other sections include medications, clinician visits, hospitalizations, other healthcare visits, clinical tests, pregnancies, medical devices, family history, foreign travel, therapy, and vital signs. A complete list will be published as part of a practice brief in the July–August issue of the *Journal*.

Common Data Elements

The PHR should include common data fields so that it can be used across care settings and among different providers. A partial list of elements includes the following.

Personal Information

Name
    Last
    First
    Middle
    Nickname

Maiden name
Previous name

Address (multiple)
Address type (primary and alternate)
Address
    City
    State
    Zip code
    Country

Contact information
Home phone
Cell phone
Pager
Home e-mail address
Work phone
Work e-mail address
Fax

Personal identification
Gender
Date of birth
Social Security number
Ethnicity or race
Eye color
Hair color
Birthmarks or scars

Allergies and Drug Sensitivities

Foods
Dairy products
Egg whites
Fish
Milk
Peanuts
Sesame seeds
Shellfish (shrimp, lobster)
Soy
Tree nuts (almond, walnut, hazel, Brazil, and cashews)
Wheat

Medications
Anticonvulsants
Aspirin
Barbiturates
Beta-blocker medications
Ibuprofen

Insulin
Iodine
Penicillin
Sulfa drugs

External
Bee stings
Cosmetics
Dust mites
Insect stings
Latex
Mold spores
Pet dander
Poison ivy
Poison oak
Poison sumac
Pollen
Wasp stings

General Conditions

Height (feet and inches)
Weight (pounds)
Blood type
    Type
    Special conditions
Last physical or check-up
    Date
    Doctor
    Result

General conditions checklist
List of general conditions (sample)
    Acquired immunodeficiency (AIDS/HIV)
    Alcohol use/alcoholism
    Allergies
    Blood/circulation/transfusion
    Cancer/tumor
    Depression
    Diabetes/hypoglycemia
    Digestive system disorder
    Eye disorder/glaucoma
    Frequent or severe headache
    Hearing impairment
    Heart condition/chest pain/pounding heart
    High blood cholesterol
    Hypertension/high blood pressure
    Jaundice/hepatitis
    Kidney disease/stones/hemodialysis
    Musculoskeletal disorder
    Paralysis
    Respiratory system disorder

Rheumatic fever
Sexually transmitted diseases
Shortness of breath
Stomach, liver, intestinal problems
Stroke
Thyroid problems
Tobacco use
Tuberculosis
Urinary/prostate

Immunizations (Sample)

Shortened name
BCG Live
Diphtheria, tetanus toxoids, acellular pertussis, and hepatitis B
Haemophilus B and hepatitis B
Hepatitis A and hepatitis B
Influenza
Measles, mumps, and rubella
Meningococcal polysaccharide
Mumps
Pneumococcal
Poliovirus
Rabies
Rubella
Smallpox
Tetanus and diphtheria
Tetanus
Typhoid
Varicella
Yellow fever

Note

1. Connecting for Health. "Connecting Americans to their Healthcare." July 2004. Available online at www.connectingforhealth.org/resources/generalresources.html.

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