

# Future Forward

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By Diann H. Smith, MS, RHIA, CHP, FAHIMA

It is hard to believe this is my last *Journal of AHIMA* column as AHIMA's President/Chair of the Board of Directors. I am genuinely grateful to have joined you in bringing to life the theme for AHIMA's 90th year: "Inspiring Leadership, Influencing Change." I hope it continues to serve as a catalyst for each member of AHIMA to take action, lead with confidence, and BE BOLD.

**LEADERSHIP.** With this theme in mind, the AHIMA Board of Directors declared a bold vision for transformation, characterized by renewal in 2019 and a path toward innovation and leadership within the healthcare ecosystem by 2022. To begin transformation and act on this vision, the board has set a new strategic plan for 2019. Be on the lookout for the first wave of communication by the end of the year.

**TAKE ACTION.** Leading us into our future is AHIMA's new CEO, Wylecia Wiggs Harris, PhD, CAE. Her years of association leadership and business acumen are helping us fast-track a culture shift toward transparency, agility, and openness to change. Wylecia is focusing our resources on building a foundation of operational excellence and organizational health and implementing the strategic direction to grow our impact and strengthen the partnership between AHIMA and its members.

**BE CONFIDENT.** The exciting news is AHIMA's strong brand and collective expertise can be leveraged to innovate and meet the demands of our rapidly changing healthcare environment. We are in a strong position to lead our profession in solving the most pressing healthcare problems. Together we are paving the way for a future in which health information professionals are critically valued as leaders of the ecosystem and positioned to solve systemic problems with high-quality, trusted information.

**BE BOLD.** We have taken a huge first step in setting direction and naming the pivots we must make. Now the challenging work begins—to shift our actions, behaviors, and mindsets toward building the market-driven, high-impact organization we strive to be. Even as we face the need for transformation, we face an even greater opportunity to inspire leadership and ultimately influence change in the lives of consumers.

**THANK YOU.** On a personal note, I treasure the lifelong relationships and precious memories I have experienced this year. I am grateful for the willingness of the board to wrestle with tough decisions and new ideas. I am grateful for the service and time of passionate volunteers. Finally, I am grateful for the expertise and commitment of our staff. AHIMA has a winning combination of members and staff that will inspire leadership and influence change for years to come.

Serving as your president/board chair has been an honor, a joy, and an experience that I will always cherish. I took on this role with a mindset of taking chances, advocating for our profession, and making courageous decisions. I hope you have felt even a small piece of what I hoped to inspire. I encourage each of us to continue leaning into the transformation we have begun and, most importantly, to BE BOLD.

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