

Getting Engaged for Life

Save to myBoK

by Wendy L. Mangin, MS, RHIA

With 2008 drawing to a close, and with it the end of my term as AHIMA president, I want to reflect on what it means to be really engaged in one's profession. Each of us has busy and fulfilling professional lives. We give 100 percent to our employers each and every day, and our focus is on meeting our goals and contributing to our organization's success.

I'm asking for just a little more from each of you. I am asking you to also be engaged in the happenings beyond your office, organization, community, and even your state.

Taking Knowledge and Experience beyond Facility Walls

When I started my first HIM job as an assistant director of medical records, my boss encouraged me to attend the regional HIM meetings. There I made valuable contacts that I have kept to this day. This was my first exposure to other HIM professionals who experienced many of the same challenges I dealt with on a regular basis.

I volunteered for committees and held several offices within this group. When the state association meeting rolled around, my boss sent me, explaining that I would again meet great people and gain insight and knowledge from the educational sessions. She was right again.

I liked the interaction with other professionals and realized there was much to learn outside of my organization. I started volunteering for state-level committees and always felt I derived as much benefit from the experiences as the time and effort I gave.

Stepping Forward, Getting Involved

As my knowledge and experience increased, I felt that I could contribute and help make a difference in my field. When issues arose in my state that could affect the HIM profession, I knew it was time to get involved and step up.

A good example was the movement to legislate record copy fees in my home state. Many HIM professionals in my state worked on a compromise that later became law. Another example that many HIM professionals experienced firsthand was the implementation of the HIPAA legislation. Our privacy and security knowledge positioned us to take leadership roles.

I hope many of you feel a personal responsibility to give back to your profession and association. You can do this in many ways, such as volunteering for AHIMA committees, task forces, or practice councils. You can become members of ACE, the Action Community for e-HIM Excellence, and share your mentoring, speaking, or writing skills. You can submit your name for a national office.

If leading at the national level is not a personal goal for you, then exercise your privilege to vote when others put their names forward. Take time to read about the candidates and make informed choices. Your vote really can make a difference.

There has never been a better time to get involved and become engaged. There are many important and complex issues facing HIM. We need everyone's best effort working together to improve health information and in turn improve patient care and our healthcare system.

Each of us has much to share; we bring unique experience, knowledge, and insight to the table. Becoming engaged really can help shape the association to serve us in the future. Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl observed that as humans our highest reward is purpose. Engagement = purpose.

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Driving the Power of Knowledge

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