

Gifts of Giving, Learning Help Association Grow

Save to myBoK

by Barbara Siegel, MS, RHIT

This year the Association took a look back through its archives, reflecting on the people, ideas, and issues that brought us to our 75th year. Grace Whiting Myers, the Association's first president, wrote of the need to serve with tact and the ability to follow the rules. Edna K. Huffman's *Manual for Medical Record Librarians* guided many of us toward HIM excellence. More recently, government programs and regulations have created new imperatives for advanced training and education for HIM professionals.

In today's healthcare environment of public reporting, heightened awareness of medical errors, and financial constraints, HIM professionals are key members of the healthcare team. Like our founders, our diverse organization of more than 45,000 HIM professionals remains committed to the vision of quality information for quality healthcare.

The Gift of Learning

For more than 75 years, we HIM professionals have been giving our time and expertise to our employers, staff, and profession. In this season of giving, give yourself a gift—a commitment to lifelong learning. One simple way to learn is to read. For me, reading is an avocation that takes me from mysteries to romance novels to the stories of people like Lewis and Clark and Katharine Hepburn, and, of course, to healthcare industry trade journals.

The opportunities for learning today come in many formats: traditional classrooms, audio seminars, books, Internet-based seminars, and more. Looking for new methods and innovative, tested policies and procedures? AHIMA's FORE Library: HIM Body of Knowledge (BoK) provides members access to a wealth of trusted information. Perhaps it's time to gain some new skills—the Coding Basics and Clinical Data Management online learning modules may meet your needs.

As you wrap your presents this holiday season, I ask that you consider one additional gift. The 2002-2003 Foundation of Research and Education's (FORE) Fast FOREward Campaign to raise \$1,000,000 ends this year, but the need for funding continues. Our students, educators, and PhD candidates need support in their commitment to learning. FORE funds the development and maintenance of the BoK in addition to scholarships and research grants. Thank you in advance for your support.¹

Opportunities in the New Year

Looking toward 2004, I am excited about the Association's 76th annual meeting in Washington, DC, in conjunction with the 14th Congress of the International Federation of Health Records Organizations. I see increased demand and opportunities for HIM professionals, driven by public and private initiatives for electronic information. I see a shrinking work force and our need to recruit others into the profession to meet the projections for HIM workers in the next decade.

I also see an opportunity to connect with consumers. Who better than HIM professionals to explain the new privacy rules or ways to maintain one's own health record? In addition, I see continued recognition by government and private entities of the value AHIMA brings to the healthcare industry.

In this 75th anniversary year, you gave me a gift, too. This year has been one of both personal and professional challenges, growth, and new friendships. Thank you for the honor of leading the Association.

Note

1. For more information about FORE, go to www.ahima.org/fore/about.html.

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Driving the Power of Knowledge

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