

# HIM: Changing Across the Nation and the World

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by Susan H. Fenton, PhD, RHIA, FAHIMA

In 1963 Bob Dylan sang, “the times they are a-changin.” This can be the anthem for health information management professionals for this decade and beyond. *Perspectives in Health Information Management* has selected a variety of articles for this issue which exemplify the current tsunami of health information change washing over the healthcare industry.

One article describes the challenges as organizations implement electronic health records (EHRs) for Meaningful Use (MU) and the impact upon patient expectations, another the concerns encountered when preparing the industry to effectively adopt ICD-10-CM/PCS, while a third discusses the use of new methods such as telemedicine to deliver high-quality care. Many of the initiatives using health information technology and standards have an impact across the world, attested to by the study of physicians and classification systems from Greece. The use of EHRs to train students is reported on, as is the validation of new competencies for AHIMA’s new clinical documentation improvement credential. The common thread binding all of these articles together is that they are relevant to effective, up-to-date health information management practice and education.

This can be a daunting time to be a health information management professional. The technologies (EHRs, smartphones, tablets, and telemedicine) to handle the information continue to evolve at lightning speed. The standards (classification systems, messaging, and credentials) for the information content must be developed to ensure the quality of the information as well as convey semantic interoperability and meaning adequate for reimbursement and policy decisions. Education, both the *content* and the modes, are changing. Educators must grow their own skills and knowledge to train a workforce capable of helping the entire healthcare industry effectively assimilate the massive changes occurring and pending.

Lifelong learning is now essential and HIM professionals must have a plan and methods for staying current. It cannot be left to chance. An excellent place to begin is with the evidence and data included in this and other issues of *Perspectives in Health Information Management*.

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