

# HIM's Role in Healthcare Reform: an Open Letter to President Obama

Save to myBoK

by **Vera Rulon** , MS, RHIT, CCS

We have begun an important year. New leadership in the federal government signals major changes ahead, and healthcare reform could be the forefront of that change. HIM is looking forward to an exciting, challenging year.

I thank all of you for the awesome opportunity to serve as your president in 2009. I will work faithfully over the next year to ensure your trust is well placed. We are all joined by our passion for and pursuit of quality healthcare through quality information.

With a new Congress and administration set to take office, we must make sure we communicate the HIM components that will ensure effective healthcare reform. Improving the quality, use, and confidentiality of health information is central to every reform in healthcare. We must ensure that HIM voices are heard.

To that end, the following is a letter to President Obama on the role of HIM in healthcare reform.

Dear Mr. President:

These key issues must be addressed to ensure that the US has a quality healthcare system: the implementation of health information technology and standards, better public health reporting and education, privacy and security regulations, and the expansion of the HIM work force.

Health information management and technology permeate every element of the US healthcare system, from government agencies to communities to provider organizations, patients, physicians, and payers. HIM professionals work in all of these settings, which puts them in a unique position to have meaningful impact on healthcare reform.

HIM professionals play key roles in the improvement of public health through prevention, education, and research. AHIMA's community education campaign and "It's HI Time America!" initiative educate communities on the importance of maintaining a personal health record. AHIMA's Foundation of Research and Education promotes evidence-based information management practices. AHIMA and the HIM profession will continue to mobilize in order to have the impact we know we can achieve.

The US must upgrade its coding and reimbursement systems to ICD-10, which AHIMA supports wholeheartedly. Electronic health records require standards so that all providers play from the same sheet of music. Transparency in the quality and cost of healthcare will ensure we are using comparable data.

Privacy and security, cornerstones of HIM practice, are also key to improving healthcare. Ensuring privacy and security promotes consumer trust in the healthcare system. It is reasonable to consider that some patients will be more likely to seek care if they are certain their medical records are kept private and secure.

Finally, an HIM work force is a key component in all of these efforts. Healthcare reform requires an adequate supply of qualified information management professionals who can advance data quality and employ the health IT at the center of many reform initiatives.

AHIMA welcomes a collaborative effort with the administration. Ours would be a partnership defined by a shared pursuit of quality healthcare for every American. And for the tens of millions of Americans who have

limited access to our world-class healthcare services—or worse, no access at all—what in this great country matters more?

Respectfully yours,

Vera Rulon, president, AHIMA

**Vera Rulon** ([vera.rulon@pfizer.com](mailto:vera.rulon@pfizer.com)) is director of business operations at Pfizer in Nyack, NY.

---

**Article citation:**

Rulon, Vera. "HIM's Role in Healthcare Reform: an Open Letter to President Obama" *Journal of AHIMA* 80, no.1 (January 2009): 8.

---

Driving the Power of Knowledge

Copyright 2022 by The American Health Information Management Association. All Rights Reserved.