

HIM's Time to Shine: ARRA Offers Challenges and Opportunities for HIM Professionals

Save to myBoK

By Rita Bowen, MA, RHIA, CHPS, SSGB

When I think of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and what it means for HIM professionals, I am reminded of the Queen song "Time to Shine."

AHIMA members' diverse backgrounds will be key to the HIM professional's evolution into the pillars of strength that support and promote meaningful use and the necessary changes to promote quality care and reduce unnecessary costs.

Navigating the ARRA Changes

I hail from the Cohutta Mountains, which are part of the Blue Ridge Mountain chain. The area is characterized by steep, rugged terrain-not unlike the image in front of us as we strive toward meaningful use and demonstrate the HIM professional's role in this important era of healthcare.

The Cherokee Indians named the Cohuttas, which means "Frog Mountain." The Cherokees held the spring frog in high esteem because it could climb and be reborn (awaken from hibernation) to harken the arrival of spring.

It is time that HIM professionals awaken and focus on redefining who and what we are and share the vision of what and who we can be in the world of e-HIM and ARRA.

We must work with other health information professionals who are contributing to the world of e-HIM, including those with differing educational backgrounds and work experiences. The future belongs to those who have developed the capacity to think analytically, communicate effectively, and work with others from different backgrounds to improve the healthcare system.

Redefining HIM

Healthcare is in a technology revolution, with more staff contributing to EHR implementations at varying levels. It is vital that we share our expertise and body of knowledge with the industry.

We must break the image of specific HIM functions or a unique HIM department and make the industry see that HIM is threaded into every business process. In this view, the core HIM functions are incorporated into information processes for such focus areas as data quality management, privacy and security, record content, and compliance with laws and regulations.

ARRA is driving rapid change. We must continue to provide input regarding standards, tools, education, and regulatory incentives.

HIM professionals can play a meaningful part in healthcare reform, demonstrating and promoting quality care, turning data into useful information, and controlling costs. We have a chance to recreate our profession into something that more closely reflects the roles we have taken on and the changing world we inhabit.

One Common Purpose

In the small rural mountain community of Cohutta, everyone rallied around each other to assist when needed. AHIMA members are also a community, and it is time all of our different backgrounds, our different focuses in work, come together for a greater purpose. We are one extended community, united around a common purpose.

The list of stakeholders that we need to collaborate with is endless, and we must actively forge relationships with other strong information and technology organizations where we can demonstrate the benefit of our certifications and our readiness to make positive contributions in the healthcare industry. ¢

Rita Bowen (rita.bowen@erlangers.org) is enterprise director of HIM services at Erlanger Health System in Chattanooga, TN.

Article citation:

Bowen, Rita K.. "HIM's Time to Shine: ARRA Offers Challenges and Opportunities for HIM Professionals" *Journal of AHIMA* 81, no.8 (August 2010): 10.

Driving the Power of Knowledge

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