

Harnessing the Power of Data for Healthcare

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By Shauna Overgaard, MHI

The adoption of analytic skills increases a health information management (HIM) professional's competencies, which in turn improves their use, interpretation, and application of data. This strengthens their vision as leaders in the field as well as their ability to contribute to the successes of healthcare.

“With increased use of technology and the data it creates, HIM professionals must be able to demonstrate the skills needed to analyze data in a way that creates meaningful information upon which other healthcare stakeholders can take action.”¹

Specifically, skill in clinical and business analytics empowers HIM professionals to fulfill the approaching demands of regulatory mandates (<http://www.healthit.gov/policy-researchers-implementers/meaningful-use-regulations>), to improve the quality and safety of patient care, and to respond to changing methods in payment/reimbursement.² Interestingly, over half of healthcare organizations represented in the 2014 Information Governance in Healthcare survey that recognize the need to align the management of information across functional areas have yet to initiate an information governance (IG) program.³

This undertaking calls for the leadership of analytically trained health information professionals with broad organizational knowledge and a desire to improve the core functions of management practices. Furthermore, proficiencies required to manage, analyze, and accurately infer data—while maintaining the joint strategic vision of an organization's internal and external structure—are vital. Given the vast amount and varying types of available data, to those working in healthcare, it becomes increasingly important that stringent statistical processes and rigorous planning inform analyses. This is imperative not only as a matter of principal, but also due to the potential impact of each data-driven decision in an emergent system.

AHIMA's recognition of the field's evolution towards “information governance,” a healthcare imperative, exemplifies the association's understanding of the training required to advance the marketability of its members. Effective IG recognizes the challenges facing healthcare and leverages data as the initiator of proactive transformation. Individuals who desire to validate specialized competence in healthcare data analytics may choose to earn a Certified Health Data Analyst (CHDA) designation (<http://www.ahima.org/certification/chda>).

This move toward IG presents a unique opportunity for HIM professionals to lead the development of well-defined and well-integrated analytics programs to assist in the transformation of healthcare.

Notes

1. Sandefer, Ryan; Marc, David; Mancilla, Desla; Hamada, Debra. “[Survey Predicts Future HIM Workforce Shifts: HIM Industry Estimates the Job Roles, Skills Needed in the Near Future](#).” *Journal of AHIMA* 86, no.7 (July 2015): 32-35.
2. Cohasset Associates and AHIMA. “[2014 Information Governance in Healthcare: Benchmarking White Paper](#).” 2014.
3. “[Results of the AHIMA 2014 Workforce Study](#).” March 2015.

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