

House Approves Changes to Membership Categories: Issue Forums Envision HIM's Future

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From e-HIM® to technology to building the work force, there's no shortage of issues whose outcome will affect the future of the HIM profession. These issues and more were on the agenda for the AHIMA House of Delegates during its annual meeting on Sunday. In addition, the members voted on four action items.

President, President-elect, Past President Must Hold Credentials

The House first approved a motion to modify the bylaws to require that the president-elect, president, and past president of AHIMA be AHIMA-approved credential holders. The motion was brought by the Massachusetts Health Information Management Association. The motion was approved by two-thirds majority vote.

Next, the House approved an amendment to the AHIMA bylaws proposed by the Board of Directors. The bylaw change eliminates the "associate" membership category and defines "active" members as "individuals interested in the AHIMA purpose and willing to abide by the Code of Ethics." The change removes the requirement that active members hold an AHIMA certification in good standing. The bylaw change also requires the majority of members of the Board of Directors to be AHIMA-approved credential holders. It also eliminates the "associate" membership category for component state associations.

The motion was approved by a vote of 143 to 70. The amendment was proposed by the board in March; subsequently, the House voted to postpone the vote until the October meeting. Prior to the meeting, the topic also was discussed online in chats and discussions in the AHIMA Communities of Practice at www.ahima.org and in Team Talks and state meetings.

Also Passed: Resolution, CHS-Related Standards Change

In other action items, the House approved a resolution proposed by the EHR Practice Council. The "Resolution on the Legal Health Record" was written to facilitate a single-source legal health record and eliminate duplication of records in multiple formats to meet legal requirements. For the complete text of the resolution, see ["Resolution on the Legal Health Record". *Journal of AHIMA* 78(1): 53].

Finally, the House approved a revision to the Standards for Initial Certification and Standards for Maintenance of Continuing Education Units in Certification. The revision, proposed by the Council on Certification, consolidates the Certified in Healthcare Privacy (CHP) and the Certified in Healthcare Security (CHS) credentials into one credential, Certified in Healthcare Privacy and Security (CHPS).

AHIMA will continue to provide CE maintenance for all three credentials. The CHS credential had previously been offered through the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS).

In addition, the Council responded to a recommendation proposed in 2005 by the House that would include e-HIM as a CEU category. The Council's response was that e-HIM would be noted in the HIM professional definition, and that reference to e-HIM in examples of HIM practice would be more appropriate than establishing an e-HIM category.

AHIMA president Jill Callahan Dennis, JD, RHIA, alerted the delegates that two more issues would be coming up for vote electronically by December 2006. These concern bylaw amendments related to language on sections and societies and on parliamentary authority. More information will be posted in the State Leaders and HoD Community of Practice at www.ahima.org.

Forums Tackle Biggest Issues

During the issue forums, delegates held group discussions on six other issues:

- Building alliance activities
- Future of the House of Delegates
- Preparation of new roles in technology
- Promotion and marketing of the profession and credentials
- Recruitment of members and students
- Shortage of work force, especially in coding, transcription, and registrars

During the meeting, each group summarized its recommendations. For example, in the discussion on “preparation of new roles in technology” the groups identified HIM functions or roles being affected by technology. These include:

- EHR implementation
- RHIOs or health information exchanges
- e-discovery

Participants envisioned what HIM departments will look like three to five years from now:

- HIM departments will have more highly skilled employees
- HIM professionals will be the primary go-to people on issues in the health information management domain

Finally, the group identified new roles likely to emerge as a result of technological change. These included: enterprise/HIM applications, training specialist, IT project managers, clinical trials, data standards, security/privacy/confidentiality specialist, and revenue cycle managers.

Industries where HIM was likely to have increasing influence included pharmaceuticals, vendors, public health, and consumer organizations.

The summaries will be available online in the State Leaders and HoD CoP.

The meeting also included a report on the state of the association from executive vice president/CEO Linda Kloss, MA, RHIA, FAHIMA. Describing 2006 as “an absolutely remarkable year for health information management and AHIMA,” Kloss described how the association has met its goals in four strategic areas: e-HIM, outreach, “Success by Association,” and education and certification. The report is available online in the State Leaders and HoD CoP.

In addition, members of the 2007 Nominating Committee were announced. They are: Mervat Abdelhak, PhD, RHIA, chair; Richard Brown, MPA, RHIA; Rhonda Edgecomb, RHIT, CHP; Dwayne Lewis, RHIT, CCS; Shirley Eichenwald Maki, MBA, RHIA, FAHIMA; and Ann Waters, RHIA, CCS.

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