

Improving the Quality of Healthcare Data (Resolution)

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Resolution from the 1997 House of Delegates

Background Information

The healthcare industry is undergoing extraordinary change. Technology is rapidly changing how health information is managed. The HIM profession, at the crossroads of healthcare and information management, is profoundly affected by all these changes. Consequently, AHIMA's Board of Directors created Vision 2006—a picture of HIM roles for the next century—to foster professional debate and actively guide the profession's transformation. By envisioning the HIM profession of the future, AHIMA helps its members take advantage of new opportunities and take ownership of their career advancement.

Traditionally healthcare data quality practices were coordinated by HIM professionals, were department-based, and used paper records. These practices have evolved and are now technology-enabled using data elements, electronic searches, comparative and/or shared databases, data repositories, and performance improvement techniques. Data quality management functions involve continuous quality improvement for data integrity throughout the enterprise and may include data application, collection, analysis, and warehousing.

These roles are not new to HIM professionals. As custodians of medical records, HIM professionals historically have performed warehousing functions including purging, indexing, and editing data on all media including paper, images, optical disks, computer disks, microfilm, and CD-ROMs. In addition, HIM professionals are experts in collecting data using classifications systems such as ICD-9, CPT, severity of illness, and registries. Further, HIM professionals have encouraged and fostered the use of data by ensuring its timely availability, coordinating its collection, and by analyzing and reporting (displaying) data collected.

HIM professionals are traditionally responsible for managing data integrity characteristics for data collected, warehoused, and analyzed by HIM. These characteristics are data accuracy, accessibility, comprehensiveness, consistency, currency, definitions, granularity, precision, relevancy, and timeliness. As described above, data quality management roles build on the expertise and knowledge of HIM professionals. These roles are:

- **Scaleable**—they can be expanded or reduced in scope depending on the size, characteristics, and needs of the enterprise
- **Institutionally Independent**—they can be practiced in all types of healthcare provider organizations, including a wide array of product and service companies supporting healthcare
- **Flexible**—they offer options to professionals in specialist and generalist roles involving health data management, service to consumers, health information resources, managerial roles, or a combination of these; HIM professionals have the opportunity to mesh their interests, skills, and knowledge with data quality management roles

Professional growth ultimately relies on personal initiative. To support members' initiatives, AHIMA will provide the framework and tools for developing data quality management expertise.

Resolution

Topic:	Improving the Quality of Healthcare Data
Intent:	Advance data quality management by encouraging AHIMA members to take leadership roles in this area
Addressed to:	All HIM professionals and AHIMA's strategic partners
Originator:	AHIMA Data Quality Management Task Force
Approved by:	1997 House of Delegates

Date: October 19, 1997

Whereas, integrated delivery and managed care give rise to new demands for information and use of new information technologies;

Whereas, ever-changing healthcare industry trends impact all aspects of data quality management including practice venues, roles, requisite skills, and knowledge;

Whereas, AHIMA's Board of Directors identified data quality management as a future HIM role;

Whereas, AHIMA will continue to clarify and define data quality management roles;

Whereas, work on data quality management as a Vision 2006 role is now under way and early planning demonstrates that success will require Association-wide commitment;

Whereas, ultimate success depends on the willingness of individual members to be responsible for preparing for new data quality management roles by acquiring new knowledge and skills;

Whereas, AHIMA and its members are resourceful and committed; and

Whereas, AHIMA and its members have a history of successfully adapting to change and taking advantage of new opportunities; therefore, be it

Resolved, That AHIMA educate members and students to develop management techniques for each component of data quality measurement and management; and

Resolved, That AHIMA and its component organizations promote the value of data quality management, participate in national initiatives to improve data quality measurement and management through standards, classification systems, education, and other efforts and assume leadership roles to ensure that the HIM profession continues to play a pivotal role in data quality management.

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