

# Making Volunteering a Priority: What Can You Accomplish in 30 Minutes a Week?

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Everyone can feel overwhelmed with too many priorities at times. We all have family priorities, social priorities, and work priorities. And then there are volunteer priorities, the ones we impose on ourselves by carving out some of our personal time or resources to contribute to the good of a group.

## Become a HIRO

AHIMA has many volunteers. The AHIMA Foundation's most recent initiative, the Health Information Relief Operation (HIRO) Fund, was inspired by member recommendations. The fund helps those members who have been affected by natural disasters.

The HIRO Fund will live on as those disasters will never entirely go away. People who donate money to help those affected are "hiros." But our donors are not limited to just this fund. We have many activities that are funded by donors, and we thank each of them for volunteering themselves or their firms to contribute to AHIMA's projects and endeavors.

We have volunteers that staff our many councils, committees, task forces, and boards. These volunteers donate their time and expertise to AHIMA and help it craft position statements that government and industry leaders rely on for direction about new issues and the impact those issues have on our health information and patient care.

In addition, these volunteers create resources for members such as toolkits, procedures, and practice briefs. Members rely on these tools to augment their efforts to maintain up-to-date practices in their work settings. And of course, these volunteers serve to lead the association down a path that will allow it to retain its gold standard of recognition and health information stewardship.

## Committing to Volunteer

So why am I offering this subject as my first installation to the journal? As many of you know, I am interim in this role. My other "day job" was spent managing a firm, working in the trenches, and sharing information, often at the CSA level.

Many CSAs have shared with me their dilemma of finding a sufficient number of volunteers. Everyone is buried with multiple priorities these days, and I understand the stress that health information professionals are facing.

However, volunteering does not mean giving up your job or subrogating another priority. There are ways each of us can volunteer.

First, decide how much time you will contribute. Thirty minutes a week is fine. That's two hours a month or 24 hours a year. What can you do in 30 minutes a week? You can:

- Tap a member of your medical staff to speak at an upcoming regional meeting being held in your community or your hospital.
- Purchase some door prizes when you're shopping for your groceries or while your daughter tries on 17 pairs of jeans.
- Contact a state government agency to determine if it has begun thinking about ICD-10. If it hasn't, you can contact another volunteer who is contributing an hour every other week to connect with that agency and give them an ICD-10 primer.

There are many things that each of us can do that require only 30 minutes a week.

Think about your priorities. Your professional association reflects your values and your image. Will you help it contribute to the good of all members?

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