

# Moving HIM into Data Analytics a Must

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We must transform healthcare into a data-driven culture... because that's where our bosses are headed.

A recent issue of *Hospitals & Health Networks* cited data analytics as one of the top skills that will be most critical in the next three years for healthcare CEOs.

"Perhaps the most significant change in the health care environment is that hospital performance data are now available to buyers and patients... Those data increasingly drive contracting and purchasing decisions. Mastering it is an essential strategic skill for hospital CEOs—and one that often is lacking," the article says. "Insurers and employers increasingly use commercially available analytics and models that pinpoint inefficient or inappropriate care. CEOs need to be familiar with these as well, and develop the internal capacity to capture and analyze data to drive performance improvement and strategic decisions."<sup>1</sup>

A combination of forces are at work, including a shift to evidence-based decision making, a move to new payment models, the increasing amount of data being created and stored in EHRs, and the need for analytic solutions to improve population health. The end game: analytics will enable healthcare organizations to fully understand and leverage their data, for purposes that include improving quality, decreasing cost, and perhaps one day enhancing patient satisfaction.

This is a great opportunity for HIM. We need to be at the forefront of analytics because we know how to access the right—not easy—data. We understand its provenance (where it came from) and its lineage (what's been done to it). And we understand the implications of both. We've also seen this in the results of the most recent AHIMA survey on the changing workforce, which showed "Big Data analysis," "informatics," and "data mining" as the top three skills that will be more important in the future than they are today.<sup>2</sup>

This month's articles illustrate how organizations are using data assets in a variety of ways. In "[Data Bank](#)," Mary Butler describes the role data analytics plays in healthcare reform and the revised "pay for performance" reimbursement structure, and provides examples of how HIM professionals are using data analytics with relation to reimbursement and improving the quality of care.

Dawn Crump and Carolyn Tice discuss how the University of Vermont Medical Center centralized its audit function and is now analyzing that data to ensure its integrity and identify areas for improvement in "[Taking a Second Look at Audit Data](#)." Matthew Moschel offers some tips for "[Making Health Data Elegant](#)." And Ryan Sandefer and his co-authors examine the long-term impact of computer-assisted coding on HIM and its role in data analytics in "[Aligning Computer-Assisted Coding and Information Governance Efforts](#)."

Those who understand how to access data and use it for better decision making to create health intelligence are positioned for success. HIM must be ready to take the next step.

## Notes

1. Larkin, Howard. "The New Health Care CEO." *Hospitals & Health Networks* (June 2015): 25.
2. Sandefer, Ryan et al. "Survey Predicts Future HIM Workforce Shifts." *Journal of AHIMA* 86, no. 7 (July 2015): 34.

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