

Promoting Excellence with HI&T Week

Save to myBoK

by Tim Keough, MPA, RRA

The fields of health information management and information technology are more exciting and challenging than ever. With our knowledge of information, policies, and procedure—and their patient care implications—HIM professionals play a vital role in facing the challenges of the computer-based patient record. National Health Information and Technology Week (formerly "National Health Information Management Week") is not only a terrific opportunity to showcase the vital contributions of HIM professionals in delivering quality healthcare, but also a great way to show appreciation for your staff's hard work, improve morale, and have fun.

Involve the Staff

At Community Medical Center in Toms River, NJ, a task force of employees and the AHIMA Web site were key to creating a successful HIM Week in 1998. The task force brought together employees from the medical record department and administration to plan activities for the week. The group consisted of Cathy Olsen, Nancy Estes, Tracy Pease, Lisa Dodrill, and Carol Rogers from the medical record department, and Tom Percello, vice president of finance. Inviting a task force member from outside the medical record department brought an outside perspective as the group planned the week's activities. It also helped foster teamwork. Our goals for HIM Week were to recognize the staff for their great work and increase awareness among co-workers and medical staff about what the medical record department does.

Utilize the Web

Having just started my job as director of medical records in September 1998, there wasn't much time for me to get ready for HIM Week in November. Despite the time constraints in organizing the week's activities, we put together a fun, educational celebration—thanks to easy access to materials on the AHIMA Web site and the hard work of our task force.

The task force quickly found useful information to plan the week on the AHIMA Web site. One of the first things they did was pull information on HIM Week to generate a brainstorming session. During the week they used the idea sheet, press releases, logos, and selected AHIMA merchandise for awards, gifts, and recognition.

Prior to HIM Week, notices were put in all physicians' mailboxes. And using the press release from the Web site, we created a news release for *Connections*, our hospital's newsletter, and had publicity photos taken for a follow-up article on HIM activities.

Celebrate and Educate

We kicked off the week with a bagel breakfast for all employees and hung HIM Week banners in the lobby. A multimedia PowerPoint presentation, featuring the evolution of the profession and tasks within the department, was displayed in a main hospital corridor for all visitors to see. We included photos of the staff in the presentation. We set up a "tools of the trade" display table, displaying such items as code books, reference manuals, dictation equipment, and microfilm supplies. A medical record trivia contest, open to all employees of the hospital, was also displayed on the table. The quiz was educational and informative, and generated more than 100 entries. Prizes were awarded to the winners.

We held an office pizza party for the medical record department and presented AHIMA T-shirts to all medical record staff, the medical staff president, and the hospital's CEO. The medical record team was allowed to wear their T-shirts to work during HIM week.

We also held an intra-departmental activity called "So What's Your Job, Anyway?" The goal of this activity was for each functional area to understand the importance of other sections. Each section prepared a five-minute overview of what they do,

how they do it, and whom they rely on to get the job done. Associates visited the other sections to get an overview of their jobs. Besides teaching employees about the different functions, this activity got everyone involved and excited about the week. Staff gained a better understanding and appreciation of each area's responsibilities and the vital role they fill.

On Friday, medical records hosted an open house for all employees, titled "Be Our Guest." We conducted tours of the department during the open house.

Everyone had a great time during HIM Week. The activities and awards improved morale, increased awareness of the HIM profession throughout the organization, and gave everyone a little recognition for all their hard work.

To receive your free planning kit, including a press release, camera-ready logos, a merchandise brochure, and a presentation describing the development of a joint HIM and information technology "dream team" just call (312) 787-2672. The planning kit is also available on our Web site at www.ahima.org.

To use the HI&T Week logo below, photocopy, resize if necessary, and place on your flyers, posters, and displays to create an identity for your week's events.



HI&T week ideas

Start planning your HI&T Week by selecting an employee task force. Include at least one person from outside of the department, to make sure that other areas will be included in the celebration—and be educated at the same time!

- utilize the AHIMA Web site to generate ideas and obtain information
- promote the week ahead of time through in-house publications and flyers to all employees
- create a presentation about the profession and tasks within the department to display in an area for all visitors. Include staff photos in the presentation
- set up a display table showing equipment and tools used by HIM professionals
- hold a trivia quiz open to all employees and award prizes
- have a party for the department with gifts for all employees
- conduct intra-departmental tours and presentations to foster awareness of various job functions within the department
- hold an open house with tours of the department for all employees

national health information and technology week, November 7-13, 1999

The week for HIM recognition is even more special this year. That's because for the first time ever, this annual event is being cosponsored by the organizations that make up the Joint Healthcare Information Technology Alliance.

This collaboration has yielded a slight change in the name of the event—from National HIM Week to National Health Information and Technology (HI&T) Week. It's a small change, but it puts a spotlight on the cooperation needed to achieve superior healthcare with computer-based patient records.

The purpose of our celebration remains the same: to promote the HIM profession, share our expertise, and recognize our achievements.

***Tim Keough** is Director of Medical Records at Community Medical Center in Toms River, NJ. His department was one of the winners of AHIMA's 1998 National Health Information Management Week Contest. To enter this year's contest for National Health Information and Technology Week, visit our Web site at www.ahima.org beginning the week of November 1, 1999.*

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