

Putting the HIM in Health Information Exchange

Save to myBoK

By Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, FACHE, chief executive officer

What a concept. The idea that healthcare providers should be able to exchange health information to improve delivery of care-it seems like it's always been with us. But the reality is that health information exchange (HIE) is a relatively new phenomenon.

Although most aren't even a decade old, there are a number of active HIEs across the country today, with the eHealth Initiative counting 255 last year.¹ As HIE proliferates, so do the opportunities for HIM professionals to get involved. With our unique skill sets, HIM professionals are well positioned to help operate exchanges or navigate the numerous policy issues that arise. Even if we're not working with an HIE, we need to be aware of HIE activities in our city and state as they may affect us in the future.

A New Message

The advent of HIEs makes it more important than ever for HIM professionals to raise their profiles in the industry. In April, AHIMA launched a campaign to do just that by educating employers about the value of AHIMA members to the delivery of quality healthcare. To that end, our message will appear in selected industry publications both in print and online through the end of the year.

What's the message? That credentialed AHIMA professionals are the health information practitioners who provide the most confidence and assurance in health information accuracy-affording the highest quality of care delivery and minimizing risk. This is a strong message that we've tested and validated through research with healthcare C-suite employers. At a time when it seems that the only certainty is change, this message is sure to be welcomed by the hiring authorities who should recognize AHIMA members' value.

Watch for these ads to appear in publications like *Healthcare Financial Management*, *Health Leaders*, *Healthcare Executive*, *Modern Healthcare*, and *Hospitals & Health Networks* in the coming months. You can also learn more about the campaign on our Web site.

HIM Steps Up

In this month's Journal we look at the latest trends in HIE. In our cover story, "[Open for Business](#)," staff writer Chris Dimick explores why some large EHR vendors are developing their own HIEs, connecting their clients in "private" networks, and what the impact may be on state-level and other HIEs.

In "[Partnering on Patient Matching](#)," Lisa Eramo looks into the successes and challenges of organizations such as the Bronx RHIO that have formed HIM committees to tackle patient identity and data quality issues. And AHIMA author and healthcare expert Ruthann Russo, PhD, JD, MPH, RHIT, introduces us to the practices of integrative medicine and how HIM professionals can begin to think about standardizing their documentation in "[Putting the HIM in IM](#)."

As HIE evolves, we HIM professionals must ensure that it builds on the core principles integral to our practice. Ensuring interoperability, security, and confidentiality is key to the success of the HIE effort. We're stepping up to make sure of it.

Note

1. eHealth Initiative. "Report on Health Information Exchange: Sustainable HIE in a Changing Landscape." 2011. Available at www.ehealthinitiative.org.

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Driving the Power of Knowledge

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