

# Standards Benefit Patients and Industry Stakeholders Alike

Save to myBoK

By Pamela Lane, MS, RHIA, interim chief executive officer

A large part of my career has been spent working on issues of health information exchange and how we can support the electronic movement of health information. As a result, it's a subject close to my heart. What I learned from my experience is that health information exchange will only happen when entities use the same standards. Just as important, standards benefit the patients by allowing information to flow as it should—getting the right information to the right place at the right time.

With increasing emphasis on patient access to information and patient matching, more industry players are recognizing the use of standards as a key to interoperability. Two recent examples: The enforcement of health IT interoperability standards across care settings and facilities was identified as one of the top five challenges to achieving interoperability by *EHR Intelligence*.<sup>1</sup> In addition, in its final guidance for design considerations for interoperable medical devices, the US Food and Drug Administration noted that it recognizes the benefits of relying on consensus standards and their use.<sup>2</sup>

The articles in this month's Journal illustrate the state of the industry regarding the use of standards. "HIM professionals constantly use standards, whether they realize it or not," writes Mary Butler in our cover story, "[Standards and Information Governance Share a Symbiotic Relationship](#)." The article connects standards and the role they play in the evolving discipline of information governance.

In "[Health IT Time Out](#)," author Lisa Eramo assesses how far the industry has come since the implementation of the "meaningful use" Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Program—and how far it still has to go. "Without widespread adoption of interoperable EHRs," Eramo writes, "it will be nearly impossible to achieve the type of low-cost, high-quality healthcare that value-based payment reform demands." She speaks to experts about the pieces that must fall into place to enable continued success with interoperable health IT.

AHIMA is contributing to international standards through its work with the International Organization for Standardization's Technical Committee 215, Health Informatics (TC215). Anna Orlova, Diana Warner, and Sheryl Reyes describe how in "[AHIMA Leading and Influencing International Standards for HIM Practices](#)." AHIMA was selected as secretariat for ISO/TC215 due to the association's best practices in coding, information governance, and data analytics.

Former chief privacy officer at the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) Lucia Savage made the patient's right to access health information a top ONC issue. Recently, she experienced first-hand some of the information challenges that many patients face. Her account, "[Bitter ROI Irony](#)," is "just one of thousands of experiences that illustrate that we have work to do" in ensuring patients have access to their health information, she writes.

Through standards, we can advance interoperability and support trusted information. I urge you to learn about this important work and get involved.

## Notes

1. Monica, Kate. "[Top 5 Challenges to Achieving Healthcare Interoperability](#)." *EHR Intelligence*. August 14, 2017.
2. Patel, Bakul. "[Interoperability: FDA's Final Guidance on Smart, Safe, Medical Device Interactions](#)." September 5, 2017.

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