Status Check on CDI Transformation

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By Wylecia Wiggs Harris, PhD, CAE, chief executive officer

The *Journal's* clinical documentation improvement (CDI) issue gives me an opportunity to provide an update on some of the important work AHIMA has been doing in 2019.

As you know, we've been undertaking what we call AHIMA's transformation. This is an opportunity for us as an association to reassess approaches and develop new strategies, leveraging our current skills and adapting to the changing future of healthcare.

We've been doing just that with CDI. And AHIMA has seen some great results this year, including:

- A licensing agreement with Artifact Health allowing the company to integrate AHIMA's query templates into its mobile query platform
- Industry education on how AHIMA's CDIP credential is carefully developed to be the gold standard in CDI certification
- A recent study (published in these pages) on the state of CDI, giving readers a snapshot of this changing field
- The continued success of our CDI Trainer workshops, which recognize CDI professionals who are equipped to train others
- This month, AHIMA will host our CDI Summit in Chicago, IL, once again convening the premier industry event dedicated to advancing the documentation journey
- Coming up, look for more cutting-edge learning on CDI (and many other topics) at the AHIMA Health Data and Information Conference in September in Chicago, IL

In addition, to inform our thinking about what comes next, we have brought together a panel of industry experts to serve as thought leaders and advisors as we plan for the future. One of the interesting discussions has been the concept that the way we talk about CDI may need to change. While the "I" in CDI has traditionally been short for "improvement," the better word may be "integrity."

The discipline of CDI is evolving beyond improving certain elements of documentation to encompass protecting the overall integrity of documentation in the record.

In this month's issue, you'll find articles that delve into the latest on CDI and beyond. James Fee and co-authors discuss the evolving role of CDI in accountable care organizations. A. Andrews Dean explores the recent emphasis on application program interfaces (APIs) and their increasing role in policy related to interoperability. Lisa Eramo offers a sneak peek at the AHIMA World Congress Healthcare Information Summit in October in Abu Dhabi, UAE, an event that is emerging as the "best in class" professional development platform in the region, thanks to its presentation of best practices from AHIMA.

Finally, Mary Butler tackles an industry hot topic—addressing the long-standing debate in the CDI space as to whether nurses or coding professionals are preferred for CDI specialist positions. This article calls a truce and discusses how a combination of both nurses and coders on a CDI team may be the ideal state. The right balance, it seems, may come down to a combination of skills, communication, and willingness to learn from others. Which, come to think of it, seems appropriate when the end game is better patient care.

Questions? Comments? Let us know what you think. E-mail the *Journal* team at journal@ahima.org.

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