

Staying Connected

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by Jill Callahan Dennis, JD, RHIA

AHIMA's Convention Offers Great Networking, Educational Opportunities, But There Are Many More Ways to Stay Connected

This month thousands of members will gather in Denver, CO, for AHIMA's 78th Convention and Exhibit. Attending the annual conference is a great way for members to learn new things, discover new products and technologies, and forge a closer connection to the association and fellow members. Attendees say they come away with a new level of enthusiasm and energy, a newly strengthened connection to the association, and the determination to tackle new career-related challenges.

I wish every member had the opportunity to attend the conference and feel that connection. But with demands on our time and our budgets being what they are, many of us are hard-pressed to get away from work. So if you can't attend this year's meeting, here are a few suggestions for staying connected to the association and your colleagues.

Take Advantage of State and Local Activities

If national travel isn't possible, attend one of the many excellent educational programs offered by your state and local associations. I've had the pleasure of attending many state meetings this year, and they all have offered top-quality speakers and a range of topics. Most catered to members working in a wide variety of organization types—not just acute care. So if you haven't checked out your state's educational offerings lately, take another look!

Check out AHIMA's Audio Conferences and Online Education Offerings

In recent years, audio conferences have become hugely popular because they offer tremendous value with a very small investment. Once your site is registered, multiple individuals can participate at no additional charge. Topics this year have included coding, e-HIM®, privacy, security, and technology. This year, we're offering a new audio conference series designed specifically for physician practice staff.

If you're interested in pursuing professional development or exploring a new area of practice online, check out AHIMA's Web-based professional development programs. You're bound to find a topic relevant to your current professional needs, and the resources are as close as your computer.

Make the Communities of Practice Part of Your Professional Toolkit

The Communities of Practice were launched only a few years ago, but for those members using them, they've quickly become one of our most valuable member benefits. They serve as a communication tool between members with similar professional interests, and they're a great way to network with your peers from the convenience of your desk. If you're looking for advice on a practice problem, your peers' ideas are only a few clicks away.

Keep Your Profile Updated with Your Current E-mail Address

If AHIMA doesn't have your current e-mail address, you're missing out on weekly e-Alerts summarizing HIM-related news and events and other communications. By updating your communication preferences in your AHIMA profile, you can determine the kinds of communications you receive and opt out of the ones less useful to you. Updating your profile is an important way of staying connected in a way that works best for you.

I hope to see many of you at this month's meeting in Denver, but as you can see, it's not the only way to stay connected. I'd love to learn the best methods you've found to stay in touch and stay involved in AHIMA. Let me hear from you.

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Article citation:

Dennis, Jill Callahan. "Staying Connected." *Journal of AHIMA* 77, no.9 (October 2006): 8.

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