

# Taking Stock: Reviewing AHIMA's 2006 Accomplishments to Date

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*by Jill Callahan Dennis, JD, RHIA*

It's hard to believe that we're midway through the calendar year. This is a good time to reflect on AHIMA's year-to-date progress. Here are just a few of our key accomplishments so far. (To make it interesting, give yourself one point for each item you have already heard about.)

**Advances in Health Information Exchange.** The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology awarded AHIMA's Foundation of Research and Education a grant to study best practices in state-level health information exchange projects. AHIMA also began assisting RTI International in a nationwide study of varying state regulations and practices on health information privacy.

**Member Participation.** Hundreds of members throughout the country attended four in-person and one virtual Team Talks meetings in March. A record number of AHIMA members took part in Hill Day, with approximately 175 congressional visits, which resulted in several new cosponsors for the Health Information Technology Promotion Act (HR 4157).

Members also had the chance to speak directly with me through monthly informal chats hosted on the AHIMA Community of Practice.

**HIM Education Developments.** The Virtual Lab has successfully begun offering encoder and master patient index learning exercises for more than 40 programs, with more to come. AHIMA's Corporate Connections program has begun matching students and new graduates with professional practice and internship opportunities. We're also assisting in the development of 14 new HIM baccalaureate programs and 10 new master's-level programs. We developed new student recruitment materials for the HIM profession and programs.

**Member Outreach.** The new member orientation program Opening the Right Doors was launched to help new members locate the member benefits most relevant and useful to them and gain maximum value from the association.

**Expanding the HIM Body of Knowledge.** AHIMA has established a joint task force on maintenance of classification systems and nomenclatures with the American Medical Informatics Association, which will recommend a national strategy to maintain existing classification systems. Three new AHIMA practice councils have also been established to advise on issues and products related to physician practice, long-term care, and personal health records.

Our e-HIM work groups have produced new practice guides on issues such as standards for minimum content for the legal electronic health record and assessing quality and improving documentation in the electronic health record. Several new books on coding and reimbursement topics have been released.

## Taking Stock

So how did you do? If you scored 10 or above, you're well plugged in to what's happening—congratulations! If you scored between 5 and 9, you're doing reasonably well at keeping track of your association's work. If you scored below 5, please let us know how we can keep you informed more effectively. A constant challenge for AHIMA is simply getting the word out on the vast array of activities under way, the opportunities for you to be involved, and the products and services that are available to you.

As you can see from the list, there's no shortage of opportunities and no shortage of demands on our time. So as we catch our breath midyear and look ahead, what are your goals for the remainder of 2006? What do you feel AHIMA should be working on? Let me hear from you.

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