

The Power of Meaningful Practice

Save to myBoK

By Angela Kennedy, EdD, MEd, MBA, RHIA, CPHQ

Since AHIMA's inception 85 years ago, access to complete and accurate health information has been a core tenet of health information management (HIM) practice.

As this practice continues to evolve, HIM professionals stand in a unique position with the ability to impact the healthcare industry as we use our talent and skill to leverage technology to improve patient outcomes.

This is a time of great opportunity and infinite possibility.

A Meaningful Step Forward

The "meaningful use" EHR Incentive Program has provided HIM professionals with the perfect platform to showcase our ability to help transform the healthcare industry from a volume-based to value-based model. HIM professionals have played a pivotal role in achieving meaningful use across the US by leading successful electronic health record implementations, optimizing and improving clinical workflows, improving clinical documentation, and identifying gaps and deficiencies that must be overcome in order to meet necessary standards.

While we have achieved a great deal, there is much more to do as we journey toward the stage 3 goal of improving quality, safety, and efficiency. HIM professionals must continue to measure and evaluate technology as we prepare for the challenges that lie ahead. Quite a few concerns have risen in regard to fulfilling stage 3 requirements.

These concerns include: the need to standardize terminologies, classifications, and metadata to enable the transfer of patient health records and other pertinent information; the absence of coverage with mobile devices under ARRA-HITECH; the compatibility of secondary data to be shared, especially involving public health information; and the software that must be built into electronic health records so that pertinent data can be pulled as needed. All of these issues must be adequately addressed in order to realize the goal of better coordination of care. Greater access to secure data will be a catalyst to improving overall population health.

In order to make health data accessible to consumers, stage 3 will allow the consumer electronic control over their personal health information. By doing this, consumers will have access to their health information electronically through their primary care physician. Consumers can receive and share their health information as needed to make care decisions for themselves and for their families.

In addition, it allows the consumer to receive and get their prescriptions electronically through their pharmacy. Meaningful use will put a big emphasis on patient empowerment and the use of personal health records. This is something AHIMA and its members have advocated for some time: "Health information where and when you need it." Achieving this goal will be a true milestone for the healthcare industry and the consumer.

The challenges of stage 3 represent opportunities for HIM professionals. Data analytics and information governance roles are emerging quickly and we must prepare now to assume these roles. Drive the power of knowledge for your organization by leveraging technology to improve healthcare for the next generation. Dream big, believe, and lead your organization to meaningful outcomes.

Angela Kennedy (angela.kennedy@ahima.org) is head and professor, department of health informatics and information management, at Louisiana Tech University.

Article citation:

Kennedy, Angela. "The Power of Meaningful Practice" *Journal of AHIMA* 84, no.10 (October 2013): 10-10.

Driving the Power of Knowledge

Copyright 2022 by The American Health Information Management Association. All Rights Reserved.