

# Transforming the HIM Milieu for the Digital Age

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Healthcare system Allina Health is leveraging their groundbreaking electronic health record system to revamp the health information management (HIM) department and its various functions. The goal is to make HIM more effective and efficient in the digital age, which they are accomplishing in part through the adoption of e-HIM directors, e-HIM managers, and e-HIM business analysts.

Allina Health is a Davies Award recipient for its advanced, custom electronic health record. Allina's EHR implementation began in 2004 in the ambulatory and hospital divisions. Beginning in mid-2008, Allina Health began an initiative to consolidate health information management roles, accountabilities, and functions. Leadership structure was collapsed and transformed from a pre-consolidation model of four HIM directors and nine managers in the hospital settings to a system HIM director, an e-HIM director, three regional hospital HIM operations managers, and three e-HIM managers with functional accountability (see organization chart [below]).

HIM is now a division of information services, and reports to the senior vice president/chief information officer at Allina. Allina had previously consolidated functions at a system level, which included a consolidated business office, hospital registration, and coding (hospital and professional). These system divisions have a reporting structure to the vice president of revenue cycle management. In addition to organizational consolidation of HIM, several HIM functions were centralized to optimize staffing and ensure standardization.

## Forming the e-HIM Service Line

e-HIM is a service line of the HIM division and is functionally structured to support HIM system integration. Its scope includes identification, development, and implementation of solutions to support and leverage EHR system use throughout Allina Health's 11 hospitals and 90 clinics and home care divisions. Specifically, e-HIM functional managers support:

- Disclosure management/release of information service areas (running 24 hours a day, seven days a week and servicing approximately 24,000 requests per month)
- All external audit requests, including recovery audit contractor and tracking requests
- Support for denial management processes as part of "audit" tracking
- System "indexing" strategy for external results routing and electronic attachment to the record/order
- Identifying and assembling all Allina Health cost centers, sites, and vendors where records are stored (follows a strategy to "in-source" storage whenever feasible for pre-EHR record retention, storage, and destruction)
- Training to system end-users to support operational changes related to disclosure management, retention, and destruction
- Management of printable content/documentation for external disclosures
- Support consistency in new organization acquisition and growth in HIM strategy

Three years into the HIM consolidation and the increase in new project management, Allina Health identified the addition of e-HIM business analysts to the team as an integral business requirement. Allina Health's growth strategy and its numerous legacy systems created a need to understand and map the "data elements" within its EHR. This helped define and maintain a consistent designated record set and a certified printable record, and began a foundational EHR data governance discussion. These changes created new roles for HIM professionals within the e-HIM system management. In November 2011, four e-HIM business analyst positions were approved and HIM professional staffers were sought.

Improvements and efficiencies had resulted in some staff changes within the 11 hospital HIM operational departments. Open full time positions were "repurposed" and full time employee hiring within the division remained flat. Utilizing existing

information system business analyst position descriptions, the e-HIM analyst position descriptions were developed with an applicant requirement of the RHIT/RHIA credential.

Allina Health management felt it was important to have HIM professionals in these roles since they have a rich understanding of the complexities of the rapidly changing, heavily regulated documentation environment. e-HIM analysts serve as the subject matter expert within their respective project teams (either as a member or facilitator), so staff who filled these roles needed detailed knowledge of health record storage, management, EHR systems, and other core HIM expertise.

The business analysts were trained in all HIM and clinical applications within the Allina EHR training portfolio. These training sessions were conducted online as well as in a classroom. The depth of knowledge and understanding of information flow within the EHR has been a significant asset in subsequent months. Historically, business analysts and staff were exposed to the training just on the applications that directly pertained to their work. In order to “map” where electronic documentation occurs, it was determined a rich understanding of all components and applications within the EHR was needed. This helps support the longer-term management of clinical data.

Application training remains ongoing, with the majority of training occurring within the first four months of hire. This training process also provided insight for other casual end-users of HIM applications, such as nurses involved with release of information. Business analysts have also taken significant project work from various facility management leaders and are able to dedicate more focused attention to projects than the typical dedicated HIM department staffer.

The e-HIM business analyst positions were each assigned large and small projects. Large projects typically will span three years from implementation to anticipated closure and require ongoing maintenance and management thereafter. These projects include clinical data content projects, revenue cycle disclosure consolidation, retention and destruction of pre-EHR paper records, and “meaningful use” EHR Incentive Program attestation support. Also, the business analysts foster procedure and training development by creating an internal foundational “toolkit” composed of operational workflows, charts, and tip sheets for HIM and other affiliated end-users.

### **Breaking the Glass at Allina**

As part of Allina Health’s EHR update to processes, staff re-analyzed their “break the glass” policies. “Break the glass” gives a healthcare facility the ability to grant access to a person who does not normally have access to certain patient information, but may gain quick access when necessary. This action puts the users’ names on an audit log to be reviewed. “Break the glass” was initially implemented with a very narrow scope and build at Allina Health. Additional analysis was needed to determine if scope and use should expand.

## **e-HIM Projects Underway**

There are several currently existing projects underway and in the planning stage at Allina Health:

- **EHR Clinical Data Content**

- Clinical information profiling/mapping
- Designated record set (primary and secondary) development
- Printable/certified medical record report development

- **Accounting for Disclosures**

- HIPAA procedures update and review for personal health information/disclosure management
- Training development for foundational toolkit
- “Break the glass” re-analysis (see above)

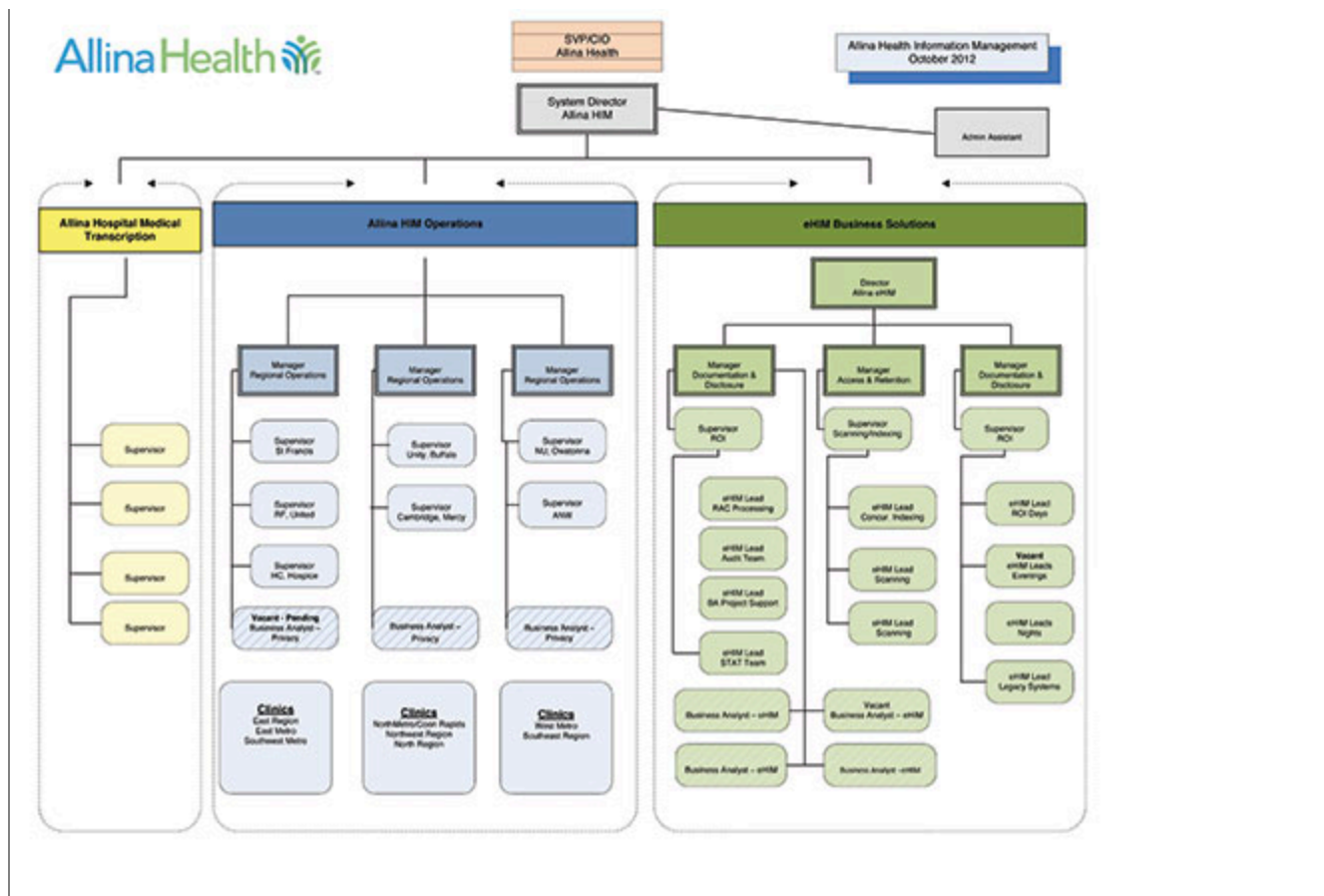
- **RCM/ROI Consolidation**

- Onboarding of revenue cycle management and release of information (ROI) requirements for WorkComp insurance requests, which are processing through e-HIM functions
- Print group element identification (collaboration with clinical data content project work)
- Electronic authentication display in ROI printed reports
- **Retention and Destruction**
  - Paper/electronic clinical information retention where care decisions are made (supports larger data governance development)
  - Standardized workflow, toolkit, and procedure development for retention and destruction of pre-EHR records
  - Active system management of pre-EHR records stored off-site
- **Additional Smaller 2012 Projects**
  - Reporting workbench development (i.e., creation of dashboard reports for release of information volume)
  - HIM workflow support and reporting for electronic copy requests/outcomes across the system as part of the meaningful use program
  - Training for EHR operational changes and updates
  - Printed report formatting for common requestors
  - Consent management projects
  - esMD and DIRECT health information exchange (HIE) projects (e-delivery of RAC requests to federal contractors and supporting HIE through the NwHIN)
  - ROI master cleanup
  - ROI service center workflow analysis/redesign

Two privacy business analysts were recently added at Allina to support privacy initiatives in HIM operations that support the HITECH Act changes to HIPAA, revocation and restriction requirements, privacy and disclosure investigations, and identity theft investigations.

## Allina Health Organization Chart

This organization chart identifies the revamped Allina Health HIM operations, which now include e-HIM managers and e-HIM business analysts.



## e-HIM Revitalizes the HIM Department

The addition of business analysts in the HIM division at Allina is transforming the type of information management, strategy development, and the departmental involvement of HIM professionals. Business analysts are increasingly recognized for their HIM expertise and depth of EHR knowledge.

Articulating the many regulatory, privacy, consent, documentation consistency, legal, and risk considerations have made these professionals valuable team assets to the entire organization.

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