

# Using Our Influence to Lead for the Greater Good

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By Angela C. Kennedy, EdD, MBA, RHIA

In a healthcare ecosystem where volume-based models are shifting to value-based ones, organizations will depend more and more on the use of informatics to drive decisions. Our success will depend on our ability to drill down to the level of detail required to support evidence-based medicine and better business decisions.

As HIM professionals, our fundamental understanding of information governance positions us as a key resource in facilitating related best practices for our organizations. Greater access to secure data will be a catalyst for improving overall population health. We are acutely aware of how ICD-10-CM will help shape population health and the great benefit consumers and organizations will derive from making the switch from ICD-9-CM to ICD-10-CM/PCS.

At this point you are probably thinking this is old news, right? I have addressed all of the issues outlined above before, and each of them are threaded into the pillars of AHIMA's strategic plan—information governance, informatics, innovation, public good, and leadership. (Note: leadership is the driving force behind the success of the other pillars.)

But leadership isn't about obtaining a degree, a credential, or even a position. It's not management, a career path, or even self-promotion. It's about using influence to achieve common goals for the greater good.

As professionals, it's imperative that we break down silos and rivalries. We know that the walls of HIM are barely noticeable today and that there is no value in territory. To gain influence you have to build relationships and earn trust. Educator and author Stephen R. Covey, PhD, said, "The job of a leader is to build a complementary team where every strength is made effective and every weakness is made irrelevant."

It takes more than skill to lead. Presence has impact and health information professionals must show and demonstrate the value of their leadership in an environment that is rapidly evolving. It won't be an easy task—we must leave our comfort zone, take risks, and conquer new territory. We can't build upon the decisions we fail to ever make. Successful people aren't afraid of failure—perfection isn't likely to show up at the start of the journey.

I have a saying that I share with my children often: "Your character is the sum of your actions." Leadership relies upon a person's character and integrity. You can't build influence if you can't be trusted. As HIM professionals, we must be committed to doing the right thing for the right reason. Integrity is a key ingredient to influence. To be a leader, you have to commit to core values and you must be genuine.

Dedicate yourself to learning and personal growth, focus on the profession's mission, and shift from rules to relationships. As Starbucks Chairman and CEO Howard D. Schultz said, "Victory is much more meaningful when it comes not just from one person, but from the joint achievements of many. The euphoria is lasting when all participants lead with their hearts, winning not for just themselves but for one another."

HIM professionals are poised to step up as a unifying force leading the charge forward as healthcare organizations face the many challenges ahead.

As always, dream big, believe, and LEAD.

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