

# Who's Hiring

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In one sense, the future is already here for those who manage health information. The skills HIM professionals need today are not very different from those they'll need in 10 years, according to a new survey of practitioners, recruiters, and employers conducted by AHIMA.

In addition, while the industries looking for HIM knowledge continues to diversify, the greatest concentration of employment is expected to remain within seven industries that are today's major employers.

What will change, however, is the breadth and depth of the competencies required to do the work. The fundamental knowledge of health informatics that may serve today, for example, won't go a long way in 10 years, according to survey respondents.

Following are the top five competencies that respondents believe are required for health information management now and in 10 years, ranked by their current importance.

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## Top 5 Competencies Relevant for HIM Work Now and in 10 Years

	Now	10 Years
Privacy, confidentiality of health information	81%	87%
Basic computer literacy skills	80%	74%
Health informatics skills-using EHR & PHR	72%	94%
Health information literacy & skills	72%	78%
Health information/data technical security	50%	76%

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The level of competency in privacy, health information literacy, and basic computer literacy are expected to remain relatively consistent. The skills that will gain increasing importance as health IT becomes more prevalent and sophisticated are health informatics skills in using electronic records and technical security.

The rank order changes, also. In 10 years, respondents believe that health informatics will be the most relevant competency required-higher than the current leading competency of privacy and confidentiality.

Respondents also identified a fast-emerging need for a softer skill-leadership and organizational communication skills. While just 43 percent of respondents consider it a relevant competency for HIM work now, 70 percent believe it will be necessary in 10 years.

## Who's Hiring?

Seven industries represent the greatest concentration of HIM employment, either employing HIM professionals directly or staffing roles that require HIM skills. Shown here are employer responses greater than 66 percent.

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## Industries Currently Hiring HIM Professionals or Using HIM Knowledge

*(Employer responses above 66%)*

	% agreed
Hospitals	97%
Consulting services	87%
Physician's offices or practices	84%
Academia/educational institutions	83%
Government agencies	80%
Personal health record companies or vendors	79%
Insurance companies	79%

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HIM practitioners gave similar replies. Both employers and practitioners foresaw these same industries having the greatest demand in 10 years, also. The research delved deeper with practitioners, asking them to rate the level of education demanded in each industry in 10 years. Educational institutions, hospitals, consulting services, and government agencies are expected to be the most likely to require master's degrees. Those with associate's degrees in 10 years are most likely to find demand in hospitals and physician offices.

The survey consisted of 20 interviews with subject matter experts and a survey of practitioners, employers, and search firm recruiters. It was conducted for AHIMA by the American Institutes for Research. The survey covers a much wider range and depth of information than excerpted here. The full results will be available this fall from AHIMA.

## What Are the Informatics Skills Related to the EHR?

In 2008 AHIMA and the American Medical Informatics Association published core competencies expected of a healthcare workforce that uses EHRs in its daily work. The recommendation originated in a workforce summit the two associations convened in the preceding year.

The competencies for health informatics skills using the EHR include the following:

- Create and update documents within the electronic health record (EHR) and the personal health record (PHR)
- Locate and retrieve information in the EHR for various purposes
- Perform data entry of narrative information
- Locate and retrieve information from a variety of electronic sources
- Differentiate between primary and secondary health data sources and databases
- Know the architecture and data standards of health information systems
- Identify classification and systematic health-related terminologies for coding and information retrieval
- Know the policies and procedures related to populating and using the health data content within primary and secondary health data sources and databases
- Apply appropriate documentation management principles to ensure data quality and integrity
- Use software applications to generate reports
- Know and apply appropriate methods to ensure the authenticity of health data entries in electronic information systems
- Use electronic tools and applications for scheduling patients
- Educational and training programs, healthcare organizations, and professions can use the core competencies matrix to:
- Support the design of in-service and on-the-job training programs for the current workforce
- Serve as a reference for healthcare workforce job descriptions
- Plan professional development activities
- Build specific professional competencies (after review and expansion by various health professions)
- Develop new employee orientation programs
- Improve formal health professional academic curricula

The matrix is described in the report [“Health Information Management and Informatics Core Competencies for Individuals Working with Electronic Health Records.”](#) The [full matrix](#) is available as an Excel spreadsheet.

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