

Why HIM Innovation Matters

[Save to myBoK](#)

By Patty Thierry Sheridan, MBA, RHIA, FAHIMA

An HIM colleague recently asked me why everyone seems to be talking about innovation lately. Innovation might seem like a buzzword, but it's also important to the future of healthcare and health information. Innovation isn't just about generating new ideas-its primary goal is to develop a different way of doing things.

Today's healthcare industry problems are on a larger scale than we have ever experienced, and they won't be entirely solved through incremental solutions. Innovation holds the key to reaching the next level for the HIM industry. Innovation allows us to reduce medical errors, increase medical breakthroughs, develop patient-centric healthcare delivery models, and leverage technology to reinvent processes-such as the use of computer-assisted coding to automate coding workflow.

Embracing HIM Innovation

As health information management professionals, we have been trained to improve the healthcare experience by ensuring trustworthiness in health information. Today's health information challenges aren't substantively different than those we used to face, and yet the sheer volume of data now available elevates these challenges to an unprecedented magnitude. With the adoption of EHRs we are also seeing an increase in data quality and integrity problems.

I have met successful HIM professionals around the country in the past year, and noticed that they have one critical skill set in common-they are innovators. They aren't afraid to experiment or try new ideas, all the while preserving the fundamental ethics and purpose of the profession. They also aren't afraid to take risks or bend current rules-within the bounds of ethical practice, of course. Innovation is about creating new rules. Healthcare is a highly regulated environment, which makes innovation a challenge. But, in the end, we must-and do-work with regulators to remove barriers to innovation.

An insight I gained this year is that innovation is not something that an organization develops. Innovation is spurred on by individuals like you and me. As children we learned innovation skills through the art of play. Successful innovators have honed these three skills in particular: imagination, creativity, and problem solving. Innovators take charge in their organizations and bring these attributes to the forefront of department and industry processes.

AHIMA Recognizes Innovation

AHIMA will host the inaugural Health Information Innovation Leadership Conference on October 2-3 during the 84th annual AHIMA Convention and Exhibit in Chicago, IL. During the conference AHIMA will showcase innovative progress in workforce development and the transformation of health information practices.

AHIMA is also recognizing the importance and impact of innovation with the new Grace Award, named after AHIMA's founder Grace Whiting Myers. This award recognizes excellence in health information management, and will be awarded during the AHIMA convention to healthcare delivery organizations that demonstrate effective and innovative approaches to using health information in the delivery of high quality healthcare.

Inspiration for innovation is all around us-we only need to take the time to put our imaginations to work each and every day. Dream Big!

Patty Thierry Sheridan (patty.thierrysheridan@ahima.org) is president of Care Communications, Inc.

Article citation:

Sheridan, Patty Thierry. "Why HIM Innovation Matters" *Journal of AHIMA* 83, no.10 (October

2012): 10.

Driving the Power of Knowledge

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