

# Year of Milestones

Save to myBoK

by Wendy Mangin, MS, RHIA

We have much to celebrate as 2008 begins to wind down. AHIMA has achieved several milestones.

First and foremost, this year marks AHIMA's 80th anniversary. The association's mission is as relevant today as it was eight decades ago: advancing the vision of quality health information for quality care.

AHIMA's founders strove to improve the completeness and accuracy of health records. This remains a key focus for our work today, though the complexity of this challenge has become far greater. In addition to meeting the professional development needs of its members and supporting the education of future professionals, AHIMA strives to advance important public policy through its alliance and advocacy efforts.

## GINA Becomes Law

Another noteworthy milestone was the passing of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA). It took 13 years of continued advocacy efforts to finally see this important legislation become law. One of AHIMA's organizational values is the public's right to accurate and confidential personal health information. Not only does AHIMA serve its members, but we also serve the public.

The law prohibits payers from adjusting premiums or contribution amounts on the basis of genetic information. It also prohibits group health plans from requesting or requiring individuals or family members from undergoing a genetic test. More information about GINA is available in the Advocacy Assistant at [www.ahima.org/dc](http://www.ahima.org/dc).

## Focus on Medical Identity Theft

If you attended AHIMA's Annual Convention in Philadelphia last year, you might have heard Pam Dixon from the World Privacy Forum challenge AHIMA to take on the crime of medical identity theft. I am proud to report that AHIMA has stepped up educational efforts on this topic.

The *Journal* published a widely circulated practice brief on ways HIM professionals and others can prevent and mitigate medical identity theft in their organizations. In September AHIMA hosted a virtual meeting on the topic. AHIMA's community education coordinators are educating their communities about health information rights and the importance of maintaining a personal health record. The new AHIMA book *Medical Identity Theft* should be required reading for every HIM professional.

## Legal EHR Progress and ICD-10

This year also brought great progress on the record management and evidentiary support standard for EHRs, or the legal EHR standards. In August AHIMA sponsored a second national legal EHR seminar with support from the American Health Lawyers Association, the Health Law section of the American Bar Association, and ARMA International.

A momentous milestone this year was the release of the notice of proposed rule making for ICD-10 in August. AHIMA staff and volunteers have worked for years to convince policy makers and thought leaders that implementing ICD-10 is a critical step in national efforts to improve health information. Refer to your March 2008 *Journal* and AHIMA's special ICD-10 resources page at [www.ahima.org/icd10](http://www.ahima.org/icd10) for information and the steps you can take to be prepared.

These are just a few of AHIMA's 2008 milestones. For those who have helped make these achievements possible, we thank you, and we urge all to be engaged with AHIMA in advancing changes that benefit healthcare and all the people it serves.

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