Role of HIM Professionals in the e-Health era

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Introduction

- Role of the HIM professional grows larger by the day.
- Evolving as we move farther into electronic/online era.
- e-HIM comprises emerging roles as healthcare industry transitions from paper to computer-based systems.
- Explosion in e-HIM job opportunities has been caused by:
  - ARRA / HITECH
  - Push for EHR and HIE
  - Increased demand by the public
  - Need to reduce cost & improve efficiency
  - Need to increase patient safety & improve patient care
Meaning of e-Health

- The use of all electronic means available to:
  - Improve patient care and quality
  - Standardize health practices wherever possible
  - Provide for longitudinal medical records across time & places
  - Enhance medical research, and
  - Lower healthcare costs while increasing effectiveness

- While at the same time:
  - Protecting personal health information (PHI)
  - Assuring patient data confidentiality, integrity and access
  - Meeting HIPAA requirements

- Many definitions of e-Health
  - 51 unique published definitions\(^1\)
Meaning of e-HIM

- What about e-HIM?
- AHIMA states that:
  
  “e-HIM encompasses managing electronic health information in electronic health records (EHRs), personal health records (PHRs) and other health information technology (HIT) such as health information exchanges (HIEs).”

- What are some skills that HIM professionals need?
  
  ✓ Analyze & improve work processes
  ✓ Implement new techniques
  ✓ Redesign information management practices
  ✓ Utilize change & transition management
  ✓ Understand EHR & its impact on HIM practices
  ✓ Plan, organize & manage clinical information resources
More skills!

- More skills needed for HIM professionals:
  - Adopt best practices
  - Utilize standards-based technology
  - Maintain existing core fundamental HIM functions & skills

- The 2003 AHIMA e-HIM Initiative e-HIM Task Force developed many core competencies going forward in the new e-Health era
  - see notes page below for list of core competencies
# e-HIM Professional Roles

- In 2004, there were over 200 different job titles.\(^4\)
- AHIMA Framework for HIM Education 2004 has listed the following e-HIM professional roles:\(^5\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business process engineer</th>
<th>Health data manager</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical data analyst</td>
<td>Information resource manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical documentation coordinator</td>
<td>HIM director, manager, supervisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical research/trials associate</td>
<td>HIS applications designer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compliance officer</td>
<td>HIS marketing / sales manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data quality manager</td>
<td>HIS implementation manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data standards developer</td>
<td>Privacy / security officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data translator / data analyst</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>EHR data integrity analyst</td>
<td>Quality improvement manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educator / instructor / trainer</td>
<td>Reimbursement manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthcare consumer advocate</td>
<td>Revenue cycle manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patient information coordinator</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Areas of e-HIM involvement

- Hospitals and other healthcare facilities
  - HIM Dept. / IT Dept.
  - Revenue / Billing
  - Compliance / Insurance
- Government agencies
  - HHS, ONC, CMS, CDC
  - Standards development
  - New payment methods
- Public Health Administration
- Professional Associations
- Insurance industry

- Vendors
  - EHR, HIE, PHRs
  - Ancillary systems
- Educational
  - Colleges
  - Private organizations
- Health Information Technology
  - EHR systems
  - HIM liaison
  - HIE networks
  - PHRs
EHR Implementation

Perhaps biggest area of opportunity in e-Health era

- Leading the migration path to EHR
- Automating traditional functions
- Retraining of staff in new roles
- Automating coding function
- Automating transcription function
- Implementing CPOE
- Implementing e-Prescribe
- Interfacing all other ancillary services
- Managing EHR project implementation
- Supervising vendor design, installation, support
Public Health Administration

- HIM professionals are taking on increasing roles in: ⁶
  - Public health research
  - Public health policy development
  - Data management
  - Disease classification
  - Epidemiology
  - Population based registries
  - Disaster management
  - State health agencies
Health Information Technology

- Facilitated by ARRA / HITECH
- “Purpose of HIT is the use of devices for the management of information in order to ensure that it is available to the right person at the right time and place”
- Premise on which 21st century healthcare system in the US must be based
- HIT now aligning with delivery of care
- Thus, roles of HIM professionals have expanded into IT
- Long term strategy: build a national health information infrastructure (tie together HIEs)
Health Information Technology

Strategic roles exist for HIM professionals in:

- Planning & development of Nationwide Health Information Network (NwHIN) being spearheaded by ONC
- Local and regional HIEs
- Privacy and Security; meeting the electronic requirements of HIPAA and “meaningful use”
- Interoperability
- Further adoption of HIT
- Collaborative governance
Health Information Technology

- Hospital staffing of IT professionals
  - Programmers 29%
  - Management 11%
  - PC support 11%
  - Network administration 9%
  - Operations 8%
  - Help desk 8%

- Depicts workforce needed to implement HIT agenda
Other roles of interest

- **Patient portals for stage 2 “meaningful use”**
  - Requires providers to give patients quick, electronic and online access to their medical information

- **Medical informatics**
  - Ill defined and evolving
  - American Nurses Association – now certifying nurse informaticians
  - American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA)

- **Quality Management**
  - Study by Patrice L. Spath, RHIT describes numerous functions involving quality management
Other roles of interest

- Bringing e-HIM to small physician practices
  - Physician practices must install EHR and meet “meaningful use” or get penalized by CMS
  - Only 20% of small group physician practices have adopted EHRs (research by Medical Group Management Association)
  - BIG opportunity for a consultant!

“Emerging aspects of HIM are so diverse that total mastery is beyond most individuals, especially new entrants into the profession”

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Where do I fit in?

I have strong interest in the following areas:

- EHR and HIE specification, design, implementation, support and training
  - Hospital or physician practice
  - Vendor
  - Government agency

- Public health administration
  - Program development
  - Policy development

- Government agencies
  - Standards development
  - Reimbursement methodologies
  - Accrediting agency
How will I fit in?

- Couple my BS, HIA with my BS, Biomedical Engineering
- Obtain several certifications, starting with my RHIA
- Obtain Masters in Public Health Administration
- Membership in AHIMA and HIMSS
  - Attend meetings and conferences
- Aggressive continuing education
- Extensive networking
- Giving back to the HIM profession
  - Submitting relevant articles
  - Volunteering through local AHIMA and HIMSS groups
References


References


11. FORE/AHIMA. “Data for decisions: The HIM Workforce and workplace: Recommendations to the AHIMA Board of Directors from the Center for Health Workforce Studies based on the HIM Workforce Research Study”. Page 2