A Health Information Profession with a Long History

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is a professional membership organization of more than 54,000 health information management (HIM) professionals. Founded in 1928 to improve the quality of medical records, AHIMA remains committed to advancing the quality of health information in an electronic environment and to educate a critical workforce to achieve the goal stated by President Obama in February 2009 of electronic health records (EHRs) for all Americans by 2014.

The HIM field is in a period of rapid growth and will be an ideal skill set for EHR technical assistance. EHRs is growing and will be an ideal skill for HIM in helping medical practices adopt EHR systems, with a series of lessons and instructional material designed to illustrate key concepts and principles of the health IT workforce curriculum.

The availability of a skilled workforce that can facilitate the implementation and support of an electronic health record system is considered a rate-limiting factor to widespread deployment of EHR systems. There is a stated need for more skilled professionals to replenish retirees and bring new abilities to the expanding employment opportunities this "EHRs-for-all-patients” initiative implies. But health information management professionals represent an established profession with a long history; academic programs are already in place and offer a unique and challenging career field.

Claire Dixon-Lee is Executive Director, CAHIIM. For more information, visit www.ahima.org or www.cahiim.org.

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