

Building an EHR Learning Community

Save to myBoK

By Linda L. Kloss, RHIA, FAHIMA, chief executive officer

It is fitting that the theme for the last issue of 2009 is electronic health records (EHRs). Nearly 20 years have passed since AHIMA provided financial support for the publication of the Institute of Medicine's *Computer-Based Patient Record: An Essential Technology for Healthcare*.

This year the US finally made the financial and policy down payments to drive EHR adoption. There is a great deal we do not know about how to move from less than 20 percent EHR adoption to full adoption and interoperability, but we do know that this transformation is a fundamental part of reforming healthcare.

There remains much uncertainty about how to optimize system functionality, manage and improve data quality, and share information while safeguarding it. Lessons are being learned every day in organizations across the country and around the world.

But most of these lessons are not readily available to other organizations, so precious time and resources are lost to trial and error. This is why we must commit to industry-wide shared learning. Consider the lessons in the following articles.

Learning by Doing

In "Plan B" Cheryl Gregg Fahrenholz, Lance J. Smith, Kyle Tucker, and Diana Warner offer advice to medical practices about how to function when an EHR goes down. Like fire and other disaster recovery procedures, organizations need to plan and train for situations like this, but each organization does not need to design a process from whole cloth.

Ethan Katsh, Norman Sondheimer, and Lydia Washington describe approaches to handling consumer requests and disputes involving the accuracy and quality of personal health information in "Dispute Resolution." These issues are sure to become more frequent, and understanding what others have learned about how to manage requests and mitigate disputes can improve service while saving time and money.

The transition from ICD-9-CM to ICD-10-CM/PCS is a major systems change in and of itself. In "Converting MS-DRGs to ICD-10-CM/PCS" Rhonda Butler and Janice Bonazelli describe the preparation of revised MS-DRGs, which have been mapped to ICD-10 in a way that is fully compatible with ICD-9 to ease the transition. The process offers a model that organizations can use to convert other applications to ICD-10-CM/PCS.

Sharing Lessons Learned

AHIMA has published more than 150 practice briefs on contemporary HIM practice topics, and it offers toolkits, guidelines, models, plans, and other resources, much of which is fully accessible on www.ahima.org. The *Journal of AHIMA* Web site features online content, and HIM research is featured in the peer-reviewed *Perspectives in Health Information Management*.

AHIMA and the AHIMA Foundation are committed to being highly valued resources in the EHR learning community. When confronted by a new challenge, we hope everyone's first response is to search AHIMA and AHIMA Foundation resources for relevant guidance. And when you solve problems and demonstrate improved results, we urge you to share the solutions with others by writing an article for the *Journal* or posting lessons learned on the Communities of Practice.

Shirley Eichenwald Maki's article "75 Years of HIM Education" reminds us that learning and change have always been part of the HIM tradition. Given the monumental systems change we are now engaged in, success will require a fully engaged HIM learning community.

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Driving the Power of Knowledge

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