

Getting Excited about e-HIM

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by Chris Dimick

Chris Meyers, RHIA, had landed the job of her dreams as an e-HIM® enthusiast. A Phoenix medical network was opening a brand-new hospital and needed someone to help build a complete EHR from the ground up. Meyers jumped at the chance, becoming the administrative director of HIM/patient financial services at Banner Estrella Medical Center.

As the chief architect for e-HIM implementation, she says it felt good to “push the envelope” as far as she could toward a paper-free environment. “I wanted to step completely out of the box,” she says. “I felt like an artist with a blank canvas because I had a brand-new facility and state-of-the-art IT systems and I didn’t want to do anything like I did in the paper environment.”

Embracing Change

Hoping to get others as excited as she was, Meyers recently joined AHIMA’s Action Community for e-HIM Excellence (ACE). Comprised of HIM professionals from around the country that are actively embracing e-HIM, ACE members were gathered to mentor other HIM professionals, write articles and textbooks, testify before Congress on HIM issues, and speak at state association and national meetings.

Helping others embrace e-HIM comes naturally for Meyers. “I really love serving others in a leadership role to advance e-HIM and the EHR,” she says. “Never has there been a time when AHIMA members can have such a positive effect on patient safety and improve patient outcomes.”

A 19-year veteran of HIM, Meyers was an early adopter of e-HIM programs, working hard early in her career to get imaging systems implemented. After jobs in several HIM departments, Meyers was offered the position at Banner in 2003.

For the last four years she has worked to implement various e-HIM initiatives, including a paperless medical floor and concurrent HIM processes. The day the hospital opened in January 2004, 45 scanners were located throughout the facility so documents could be immediately scanned into the record. Many HIM processes were done concurrently, and the floor was paperless.

Helping Others

Earlier this year Meyers left Banner to form her own consulting company, eCatalyst Consulting, based in Phoenix, AZ. “I am now going out and doing so many exciting things to help other people transition to the EHR,” she says.

The EHR is a reality, Meyers says, and it is time for those in HIM to take the lead in electronic transformation. As an ACE member, Meyers aims to promote e-HIM by writing articles for AHIMA, speaking at conventions, and mentoring other HIM professionals. Taking the ACE Challenge helped her realize just how much HIM professionals mean to the advancement of the EHR and how much knowledge they have to contribute.

Embracing e-HIM all comes down to convincing one’s self that it will only improve HIM. Look at your HIM processes, Meyers says, and transform them through e-HIM. If you need help, call on ACE members.

“It is hard for people to say, ‘What is my life going to be like, what am I going to do when the paper is gone,’” she says. “I encourage people to embrace the change. We have to create our future.”

Article citation:

Dimick, Chris. "Getting Excited about e-HIM" *Journal of AHIMA* 78, no.9 (October 2007): 132.

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