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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Well, we've welcomed in 2008!

Another year has passed and we're already a month into the New Year. Time really does fly by, and it seems the faster it goes the more changes come with it. The field of Health Information is full of changes that bring both

excitement and challenges to those of us who have chosen it as our career path. Today the options HIM professionals have available to them have changed and seem to be limitless. Positions are no longer restricted to the traditional HIM department in an acute care hospital, as it was when I became an ART, but have expanded to include Information Technology (IT); Compliance; Patient Registration; e-HIM; Education; Payers; Consulting; Ambulatory Care; Physician Practice—and the list goes on and on.

MS-DRGs brought sweeping changes to the MCR reimbursement system and created a wide gap between MS-DRGs and the AP-DRG system we use here in New York State. This has created challenges in reporting, as computer systems continue to try to catch up and accommodate the greater differences between these two reimbursement systems.

The move to the electronic record is happening in every healthcare setting but in so many different ways, stages, systems, and speeds that it's impossible to keep track. This is the 'wave of the future' but, at the same time, a path wrought with

twists and turns that test all of the HIM knowledge we possess as we strive to protect patient confidentiality while not compromising patient care.

This is such an exciting time for our profession, but it can also be difficult to choose an area of concentration. We are no longer all generalists in the various HIM skill sets but are, at times, forced to choose a 'specialty' in which to focus our efforts. This may be necessary due to the overwhelming amount of information that is constantly changing, and the impossible task of trying to keep up with it, that can lead each of us to experience information overload!

The changes that have (and continue to) occurred in the HIM profession should be embraced. They provide us with challenges that keep us excited to have chosen Health Information, as well as making it an attractive field to students or those looking for a new career.

AHIMA will once again coordinate Hill Day in Washington, DC on April 8. Hill Day is an exciting experience that I encourage each of you to consider attending for yourselves. It allows us the opportunity to participate in the governmental process and gives us a chance to see that even a single HIM professional can influence change(s) that impact us all. So, please consider this chance to be an active participant in affecting change, first hand.

As we continue on through the Leap Year, I urge each of you to embrace the changes that you experience and take the opportunity to be an agent of change yourself when it is needed.

Donna J. Rugg, RHIT CCS

IN THE NEWS

e-HIM News and Information

Stronger Health Data Privacy Called For

The National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics (NCVHS) has released a report entitled "Enhanced Protections for Uses of Health Data: A Stewardship Framework for 'Secondary Users' of Electronically Collected and Transmitted Health Data." The report contains more than 20 specific recommendations for increasing the privacy of EHRs. In the report, NCVHS calls for "a transformation, in which the focus is on appropriate data stewardship for all uses of health data by all users, independent of whether an organization is covered under HIPAA."

The committee also found that HIPAA is effective when health data is used for patient care, but that "the more removed the user is from the patient, the less assurance there is that the data will be protected." The report raises concerns, among other things, about the sale of health data, the adequacy of de-identification techniques, the numerous state and federal laws covering health information privacy, and the difficulty of distinguishing between research using health data and quality improvement programs using the same data. To read the full report, go to: <http://www.ncvhs.hhs.gov/071221lt.pdf>.

Source:

*HCPPro HIPAA Weekly Advisor e-newsletter,
Volume 9, Issue 2, January 14, 2008*

HIPAA News and Information

Final Security Educational Paper Available

CMS released the final paper in its HIPAA Security Educational Paper series on December 12, 2007. "Security Standards Implementation for the Small Provider" is intended to assist small healthcare providers' HIPAA security rule compliance.

The series includes the following:

- Security 101 for Covered Entities
- Security Standards Administrative Safeguards
- Security Standards Physical Safeguards
- Security Standards Technical Safeguards
- Security Standards Organizational, Policies and Procedures and Documentation Requirements
- Basics of Risk Analysis and Risk Management

To access the downloadable pdf files of CMS' HIPAA Security Information Series, copy and paste the following URL into your Web browser: http://www.cms.hhs.gov/EducationMaterials/04_SecurityMaterials.asp#TopOfPage.

Source:

*HCPPro HIPAA Weekly Advisor e-newsletter,
Volume 9, Issue 2, January 14, 2008*

On the National Front

ADVANCE Salary Survey

The article on ADVANCE Newsmagazines' 2007 salary survey results has been so popular they have decided to leave it up on their Web site awhile longer. To access the article, copy and paste the following URL into your Web browser:

<http://health-information.advanceweb.com/editorial/content/editorial.aspx?cc=103247&CP=1>

Source:

*Advance E-Newsletter,
January 3, 2008*

AHIMA NEWS AND INFORMATION

Updated PHR Campaign Launched



The updated personal health record (PHR) Consumer Awareness Campaign, which went live on January 28, has already generated much excitement. The campaign has a celebrity spokesperson supporting it, along with a newly renovated Web site that includes videos of personal health stories, to engage consumers in information on how a health record is used and how to create their own PHR. This group has a powerful voice in influencing healthcare industry legislation and business practices, and become strong allies and advocates for the HIM profession. As consumer awareness increases throughout the campaign, HIM professionals should be prepared to respond to an increase in requests for assistance with education on the PHR.

The 2008 campaign includes many new components and members should be on the lookout for a corporate documentary, a PSA featuring John Walsh of 'America's Most Wanted', revamped materials for local public relations efforts, marketing initiatives, and community presentations, and more. Members are also encouraged to visit the updated Web site at: <http://www.myPHR.com> and create their own personal health record.

Source: *AHIMA Advantage e-alert,
Volume 10, Issue 3, January 16, 2008*

Winter Team Talks

AHIMA has announced the dates and locations for Winter Team Talks. This year there will be two locations: Las Vegas on March 6, and Washington DC on April 7 (in conjunction with Hill Day on April 8.) Meeting and hotel registration details are available on the State Leaders and HOD CoP.

Mark your calendar and don't miss this opportunity to hear the latest information affecting your profession first-hand.

Source: *AHIMA Advantage e-alert,
Volume 9, Issue 44, November 7, 2007*

FORE Merit Scholarships

The 2008 FORE Merit Scholarships and educational loans information has been posted on the AHIMA Web site. This year's application submission deadline is **April 25**. For information and forms, copy and paste the following URL into your Web browser:

<http://www.ahima.org/fore/student/programs.asp>

*Source: Moving FOREward e-newsletter,
January 29, 2008*

2008 Convention

The 2008 AHIMA Convention will be held in Seattle, WA, from October 11 to 16. The following link to AHIMA's Web site will take you to the main housing information page:

<http://www.wynjade.com/ahima08/index.cfm>.

Once there, you can choose additional drop-downs from the left of the page to obtain additional information about individual hotels and their amenities.

Please note that the AHIMA discounted housing rate cannot be guaranteed for any reservations made after September 12, 2008.

*Source: AHIMA Resources e-News,
November 2007*

FROM YOUR PEERS

News from the IPRO Front

December Quarterly Meeting

The quarterly meeting of the IPRO Provider Relations Committee was held on December 11, 2007. In addition to NYHIMA, there were representatives from the hospital community and professional associations, IPRO and the New York State Department of Health and Office of Mental Health.

Medicare/Federal Activities:

- HCQIP Activities:
 1. Nursing Homes – IPRO continues to work with 46 nursing homes under intensive review for improvement of care of patients with pressure ulcers and Alzheimers; 84 nursing homes throughout the state are participating in the Advancing Excellence Campaign.
 2. Home Care – Readmissions to hospitals continues to be problematic for home care agencies in NYS, as it is in other states as well.
 3. Hospitals – IPRO supports the CMS public reporting data on a quarterly basis through IPRO updates; IPRO is also working with NYSDOH on enhancements to the state's Web site.
 4. DOQ-IT – Due to a delay in the release of HEAL dollars, this project to support IT efforts in 350 primary care practice groups throughout the state is being negatively impacted. Meanwhile, IPRO continues to

work with IRAs and RHIOs to keep the momentum moving.

5. Surgical Care Improvement Program – Data collection ended in July 2007 and IPRO is waiting for the CMS report.
- Hospital Payment Monitoring Program: IPRO has completed this project and hospitals showed marked improvement. Results are available on IPRO's Web site. It is anticipated that CMS will drop this program from the upcoming QIO's 9th SOW, and turn ongoing responsibility for payment monitoring over to the RACs. *Coincidentally, there is a bipartisan effort on Capitol Hill in Washington to propose a one-year moratorium on the present-day RAC program. New York's Senator Schumer is involved in this effort.*
 - Beneficiary Protection Program: Volumes of appeals on hospital discharges continues to increase. There is some concern being voiced by the hospital associations over the lack of timeliness of appeals over the weekends.

Medicaid/State Activities:

- Due to improvements in asthma and diabetes care in the 20+ outpatient settings (mix of hospital and freestanding Article 28 and FQHCs) IPRO has worked with, the state wants to expand these programs to more clinics throughout the state, contingent on additional funds being allocated.

New Business:

- IPRO's fee for processing non-Medicare/Medicaid discharge appeals will be \$150 in 2008. This service started in 1989 with a fee of \$90.
- SAVE THE DATE! The IPRO Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 3, 2008

The next Provider Relations Committee meeting will be held on March 4, 2008.

*Submitted by:
Cindy M. Boester, MS RHIA
NYHIMA Representative to IPRO*

Canadian HIMA Annual Conference

CHIMA has extended an invitation to NYHIMA members to its 2008 Annual Conference at the Brock Hotel in Niagara Falls, Ontario on June 13-14.

This year's theme is "Harness the Energy ~ Generate the Power" and sessions will be based on CHIMA's three Domains of Practice: data quality, eHIM/EHR and privacy.

For more information, call Cathy Brooks, Executive Assistant, at (519) 438-6700 X226 or email her at: cathy.brooks@echima.ca.

*Submitted by:
Donna J. Rugg, RHIT CCS*

Experienced Coders: A Dying Breed

I often hear the following from Directors, CEOs and healthcare recruiters: “Where are the experienced coders?” or “How can we recruit them? What would attract them? What has happened to them?”

Reflecting on this, I thought about the coding profession. Twenty years ago, when I entered the coding field, I sought continuing education and support, job security, flexibility, and financial reward with recognition.

Continuing education and knowledge of coding guidelines is paramount in today’s market. Coders are not only under the scrutiny of the healthcare system but also coding greatly impacts the reimbursement. Regulatory agencies’ reviews by hospitals, state, federal, and insurance companies, plus special projects like CORE, are constantly ongoing. Above all, coders must keep abreast of the various changes. And changes there are!

On October 1, 2007, the DRG system was revamped. Medicare introduced Severity Adjusted DRGs (MS-DRGs) in which 745 new DRGs were added, all previous DRGs were renumbered, and a 2-tiered (Major cc and Regular cc) complication/comorbidities list was implemented. Another challenge that coders are now facing is working with Present on Admission (POA) indicators.

All this, applying coding knowledge and accuracy, is to be done within a timely turnaround. Some hospitals, for example, expect 2-day turnaround from the date of the inpatient discharge. In essence, there is little room for flexibility, leaving no time for coders to even digest this barrage of changes.

An article entitled “A Coding Career Path”, in the July/August 2007 JOURNAL of AHIMA, discusses the emphasis on education and credentials, plus experience, as a pathway to “higher job classifications, higher salaries, and leadership roles within organizations.”

In the past these areas have been grossly overlooked, making the coder less valued and under-appreciated. The future for the coder relies on the recognition as a revenue specialist, the absence of which will reflect in the loss of substantial reimbursement. The coder must be accepted as part of a team, with nurses and doctors, to obtain better documentation to reflect the full clinical and financial picture.

Looking ahead, participation, networking and empowering knowledge is crucial to our field. Ultimately, the recognition of coding as a profession will reflect in both salary and prestige.

Submitted by:
Pamela Schachter, RHIT CCS, Co-Chair
LIHIMA Coding and Data Quality Committee

Reaching Out: Career Day Activities

For the past three years, the HIM Department at Phelps Memorial Hospital in Sleepy Hollow has participated in our local high schools’ Career Day. Students are welcomed to our facility by our Career Day organizers and are quickly broken up into groups and assigned to hospital tour guides. The hospital tour guides take each group to visit several departments in the hospital that participate in the event and the HIM department is a favorite stop.

Each group spends approximately 15 minutes in the department where we start off by surveying how many people want to become coders or medical language specialists/transcriptionists when they grow up. It’s not surprise to us when no hands go up. We then briefly explain what each profession does and that there is a nationwide shortage before giving them a taste of each job.

Our medical language specialists love hosting the Career Day participants. They explain that each dictation is like a short story and that every story is different. We let the students listen to an actual dictation and try both traditional transcription and speech editing of voice recognition. The students love the hands-on demonstrations!

Our coders use an ambulatory surgery record to demonstrate that their job includes reading the entire record, abstracting all the diagnoses and procedures, and translating them into the alpha numeric codes that are used for statistics and billing. We let the students try to decipher the physicians’ handwriting to find diagnoses and procedures. This year we had a demonstration set up to allow the students to pin the fracture to the skeleton – it was a big hit!

At the end of each visit we provide a treat and thank them for visiting the department. Before they leave, we survey the group again to identify those who think they may want a career in healthcare and remind all the future doctors to remember to use good penmanship and not to dictate from any noisy location. We share information from AHIMA’s Web site about the RHIT and RHIA programs.

Each year we are amazed by the positive response from the students and it motivates us to make the next Career Day even better.

Submitted by:
Laura Berberich, RHIT
TZHIMA President-Elect

NYHIMA NEWS AND INFORMATION

Election Results

Congratulations to the following individuals who will be installed as NYHIMA Board members for the July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009 association year during the Annual Conference banquet in June:

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Julie L. Brucker, RHIA CCS

FINANCE DIRECTOR

Margaret R. (Prietti) Hall, RHIT

EDUCATION DIRECTOR [PROGRAMS]

Patricia D. Thomases, RHIT

Donna L. Barnard, MBA RHIA was elected AHIMA Delegate with Melissa A. Hawkins, RHIT as Alternate.

Here are the election result percentages [number of ballots returned out of number eligible to vote] by local:

Local	11/06	11/07	% Change
Adirondack	52%	56%	↑4%
Central	37%	38%	↑1%
Long Island	35%	24%	↓11%
New York	32%	24%	↓8%
Northern	40%	50%	↑10%
Rochester	56%	40%	↓16%
Southeastern	43%	23%	↓20%
Tappan Zee	48%	50%	↑2%
Western	41%	36%	↓7%

Awards Nominations Deadline Approaching

NYHIMA is looking for nominations in three acknowledgment categories: Distinguished Member, New Professional, and Author's Award. The deadline for these nominations is **Thursday, February 28, 2008**.

The forms for these awards are available on the [Scholarship and Awards](#) page of the NYHIMA Web site, www.nyhima.org. Make sure to submit your nominations for a deserving NYHIMA member that you would like to see acknowledged and recognized by the deadline.

*Submitted by:
Kathy Barry, RHIT
NYHIMA Awards Committee Chair*

New York Geographic CoP

AHIMA has a new community of practice as of January 21, 2008, the New York geographic CoP. A huge thanks to RRHIMA members, Lynn Farnung, RHIT and Karen Linder, RHIT, for spearheading the effort and serving as co-facilitators.

It's easy to add us to your communities. Go to: <http://www.ahima.org> and log in using your AHIMA ID number and password in **myAHIMA** on the right side of the screen. Click on 'Communities of Practice' in **myAHIMA** to go to your personal page.

Click on the 'join/visit communities' icon; select 'G' from the index; scroll down to 'Geographic: New York State'; and click on the join box.

We hope to see many of you, new professionals and old-timers alike, on the CoP soon!

2008 Annual Conference



The 2008 Annual Conference Preliminary Program and Registration will be in your mailbox soon. This year's conference, hosted by the members of the Adirondack HIMA, is June 15-18, in Saratoga Springs. We've added two sessions at no additional cost [CEUs provided] on Sunday for those of you who get there early and just can't wait to get started!

AHIMA is holding an item writing workshop from 9 am to 5 pm that I encourage everyone to consider attending. This is a great opportunity to learn how to write test items for certification exams that AHIMA oversees (RHIT, RHIA, CCA, CCS, CCS-P, CHPS.) It's a real skill to write a test question that meets all the requirements of a good item yet accurately tests the candidate's knowledge and abilities. So please consider attending this workshop and help AHIMA increase the pool of test questions for its exams.

From 1 to 5 pm, Andrea Clark, RHIA CCS CPC-H, will offer a coding session entitled 'Implement IDEAL Outpatient Coding Model – the Essence of Compliance'. This workshop will give coders a jump on the Monday Coding Track and an opportunity to hear a well-known expert in the outpatient coding arena.

So, watch for your preliminary program, check out the all exciting programs, networking opportunities and social events; then register early and join us to make some "HIM Magic"!

*Submitted by:
Donna J. Rugg, RHIT CCS*

Congratulations To

Sue Ellen Bice, MS RHIA (CNYHIMA) on her retirement as Director of the HIT program at Mohawk Valley Community College. Sue will continue to work part-time as the program Coordinator through May 2010.

Jerome Ndayishimiye, MSHA RHIA CIC (HIMAWNY) whose second son, Aaron Samuel, was born on November 28, 2007.

Donna Truelson, RHIT (RRHIMA) on obtaining her credential. Donna received both the Academic Achievement Award and Mary M. Zannis scholarship during the NYHIMA Annual Conference held in Rochester in 2007.

On the Local Front

Northern New York HIMA

HIMANNY's winter meeting was held at Samaritan Medical Center on November 30. The business meeting portion of the day included discussion related to NYHIMA and HIMANNY strategic planning; bylaws; membership and meeting attendance; and a discussion on coding.

Our hostess, Frances Newsted, RHIA, shared her experiences at the AHIMA Convention with the group, describing what a great experience it was and how much it inspired her. Other members present shared what they had done at their facilities HI&T Week. The meeting ended with a Christmas gift exchange and lunch at a local restaurant.

The meeting was well attended, and it was great to network and to have time to get to know each other and the talk about the roles that we all play in delivering quality healthcare services to the hospitals and agencies we serve.

Three new members have joined us: Susan Akins, who received her RHIT in May 2007; Mary Cornell, who received her RHIA in 2006; and Caroline Baker, who received her RHIT in October 2007. Congratulations and welcome to HIMANNY!

*Submitted by:
Mari Pirie-St. Pierre, RHIA*

Tappan Zee HIMA

Our September meeting, held at St. John's Riverside Hospital in Yonkers, featured Andy McManus, President, Infotrak Record Management, LLC; and James Moore, Chief Legal Officer, Verisma Systems. They spoke on the impact of technology on the release of information. The presentation was followed by a lively roundtable discussion concerning legal issues of electronic medical records in the realm of ROI, how these issues affect us, and how to deal with them on a daily basis. Thanks to Patty Thomases, RHIT, CNYHIMA President, for suggesting this program.

In October, we gathered at Westchester Medical Center for a program about the new MS-DRGs and clinical documentation programs. Angela Worden of Navigant Consulting spoke to a rapt audience on ways to mine diagnostic information from the medical record with the goal of capturing every possible cc and improving the hospital's casemix. Thank you to Debbie More for providing such a nice setting for this meeting.

November saw us take a field trip to Medco Health Solutions in Franklin Lakes, NJ, for a meeting hosted by Lorraine Tully, RHIT on using integrated data for healthcare solutions. Lorraine, Director of Integrated Informatics, and Scott Stratton, Vice President of Integrated Informatics, each gave presentations on how a large prescription benefit management company uses the statistical information it gathers in conducting its business and planning for the future. The meeting was especially interesting from the perspective of seeing the kinds of opportunities that are available to health information professionals outside the traditional acute care setting. Thank you, Lorraine, for your inspiration and hospitality!

Judy Mendez, RHIT and Lucy Maret, MLS CCS CCS-P CPC of St. John's Riverside Hospital have joined forces with the Community Outreach Director at Riverside Health Care Systems in Yonkers to communicate the message of the importance of the personal health record to the local community. This fall they participated in three events: a community health fair at the Yonkers Public Library, a career fair at Commerce Middle School, and a meeting of local healthcare organizations at the Mayor's office. When the opportunity knocks, as it did at the career fair, they also promote the idea of entering the HIM profession. These events have been exceptionally rewarding. At each event they meet more people and believe these first steps will generate more and more opportunities to deliver the MyPHR message.

*Submitted by:
Lucy Maret, MLS CCS CCS-P CPC*