**Chapter 1**

**Health Information Management Profession**

*Nanette B. Sayles, EdD, RHIA, CCS, CHPS, CHDA, CPHIMS, FAHIMA*

**Real-World Case 1.1**

The EHR is causing many changes in both the HIM profession and the structure of the HIM department itself. Because of the EHR, many functions of the HIM department can be performed remotely. Some HIM staff such as coders and transcriptionists are now working from home. The file areas where the paper records are housed are disappearing as more and more of the health records are electronic. These changes enable the healthcare facility to use the space previously occupied by the HIM staff and the file areas to be used for other purposes. Some healthcare organizations with multiple locations have centralized their HIM functions enabling them to standardize the HIM functions and to share staff between the facilities. The staff at the central location is able to perform most of the functions of the HIM department. There may be some staff at the healthcare facility to attend committee meetings, take authorization for release of information from patients, and perform other functions that require staff on site. Even though the employees work from home or a centralized location, the privacy and security of the patient information must be ensured at all of the locations and their productivity must meet the standards established by the organization.

# Real-World Case Discussion Questions

1. How is the EHR changing the roles of the HIM staff?

EHR is changing the roles of HIM staff by giving them the ability to be flexible. They have the ability to work from home and still give patients the best care. EHR also creates a center for all of the patients’ information to be collected so a HIM professional can detect any gaps in care.

2. What changes would you expect from the centralization of HIM functions? I would expect faster and better patient care from the centralization of HIM functions. There will be no “middle-man” so to speak. If one center collects and manages all of a patients records then information lost between offices would decrease.

3. What is your view of the HIM profession? The HIM profession is very important to the healthcare community as it can help doctors successfully treat patients by making sure they have all the information. It is also an important profession in the support of all patients.

**Real-World Case 1.2**

One of the strengths of the HIM profession is the ability for a career path to evolve over time. Kathryn has an RHIT credential. She began working in utilization review, and then she worked in HIM department management. After 15 years of working in hospitals she was ready for a change, so she left the hospital and worked first in a consulting firm and then for an information system vendor. In both of these roles she traveled around the country. Quickly tiring of the travel, Kathryn decided to change the focus of her career path once again. Now she is an HIM educator. While Kathryn has earned both a master’s degree and a doctorate degree, it was her HIM degree and skills that allowed her to move from one career path to another.

# Real-World Case Discussion Questions

1. What career path interests you? Why?

The career paths of HIM and Professional coder interest me. They both would give me the chance to continue onto things I might like to do like teaching or covering gaps in patient care.

2. What are the benefits of being able to change your career path?

There is a plethora of benefits to being able to change you career path the biggest one being flexibility. Many people suffer from being burnt out at work, being able to change your career path gives you the ability to find something else that might make you happier.

3. What did you find interesting about this case? Why? Kathryn has had the ability to try several career paths over her time as an HIM professional to suit her best at the time. How much she changed is so very rare as most people nowadays stay locked into one or two careers for their lifetime.

# Application Exercises

*Instructions:* Answer the following questions.

1. Visit the AHIMA website and research the qualifications for taking each certification examination and the continuing education requirements for maintaining each credential. What similarities and differences do you see?

Each certification examination requires either a class or program to be completed, or a degree from an accredited program. Most seem to require several CEUs to be completed before being able to be recertified. Each examination requires essentially the same thing, prior knowledge and the ability to continue learning.

2. Visit the AHIMA website and learn more about the House of Delegates, including its role, the taskforces, and how it conducts business.

The House of Delegates are advocating year round for the profession, the members, and the Association. These leaders help keep our profession strong and moving forward by contributing or recommending action on issues affecting the industry. ( AHIMA.org)

Task forces create a member focused objective. Task force members can be comprised of delegates, subject matter experts, and industry leaders. Throughout the year, a call to serve will be sent to delegates on a variety of topics. Delegates may be reached personally depending on their areas of expertise. Ad hoc task forces will allow for more flexibility and agility in the completion of projects. (AHIMA.org)

The House of Delegates conducts its business by reaching out members with the most expertise in specific fields of inquiry. An issue may arise and a call to serve will be sent to the delegates, task forces will be used for more flexibility and expertise on certain projects.

3. Use the http://www.ahima.org/careers resources, including the career path, to research HIM careers and write a career plan.

Coding professional > Coding manager > ICD 10 educator > Professor > Program director

I feel starting off in coding is a great place for me as I think I would like to be a professor/educator at some point in my life.

4. You have been asked what the HIM profession is. How will you explain it? Justify why you choice it as your career.

The Health information management, HIM, profession is a connection between doctors, patients, insurers, and anyone else in the healthcare field. HIM professionals collect and maintain health information to provide the best care possible for patients. Keeping up to date records is just one of many things HIM professionals do. I chose it as my career because I felt the healthcare community had a plethora of gaps in care; I hoped to breach the gaps so patients can receive the best care possible.

**Review Quiz**

*Instructions:* For each item, complete the statement correctly or choose the most appropriate answer.

1. The first professional association for health information managers was established in what year?

a. 1900

b. 1905

**c. 1928**

d. 1970

2. The hospital standardization program was started by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. American Health Information Management Association

b. Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education

**c. American College of Surgeons**

d. Healthcare Information and Management Systems

3. The formal approval process for academic programs in health information management is called which of the following?

**a. Accreditation**

b. Certification

c. Registration

d. Standardization

4. Which of the following is the formal process for conferring a health information management credential?

a. Accreditation

**b. Certification**

c. Registration

d. Standardization

5. Which of the following is a traditional HIM role?

a. Managing interoperability standards

b. Data manipulation

c. Information governance

**d. Tracking record completion**

6. Which of the following functions governs the HIM profession?

a. AHIMA Board of Directors

b. AHIMA Commission on Certification for Health Informatics and Information Management

**c. AHIMA House of Delegates**

d. AHIMA Foundation

7. Which of the following make up a virtual network of AHIMA members?

a. AHIMA Board of Directors

b. AHIMA Council on Certification

**c. AHIMA Engage**

d. AHIMA House of Delegates

8. Which of the following is an arm of AHIMA that promotes research in health information management?

a. AHIMA Board of Directors

b. AHIMA CAHIIM

**c. AHIMA Foundation**

d. AHIMA Commission on Certification for Health Informatics and Information Management

9. Which of the following best describes the mission of AHIMA?

**a. Community of professionals providing support to members and strengthening the industry and profession**

b. Community of professionals whose major purpose is lobbying Congress to change laws

c. Community of credentialed members who monitor the credentialing process

d. Community of credentialed members whose purpose is to ensure jobs for their members

10. Which professional organization sponsors the CTR certification?

a. AHIMA

**b. NCRA**

c. AAPC

d. HIMSS

11. Someone who wishes to sit for the Certified Professional Coder (CPC) certification should contact which organization?

a. AHIMA

**b. AAPC**

c. HIMSS

d. AHDI

12. In order to qualify for an AHIMA fellowship, what minimal educational level is needed?

a. Associate degree

b. Bachelor degree

**c. Master’s degree**

d. Doctorate degree

13. Which of the following qualify for CEUs?

**a. College course**

b. Applying for fellowship

c. Being on the AHIMA Board of Directors

d. Participating on an AHIMA national committee

14. Critique this statement: Once someone has earned the registered health information technician (RHIT) credential, it is a lifetime certification.

a. This is a true statement.

b. This incorrect as it is valid only until you retire.

c. This is incorrect as RHITs have to retake for the exam every 10 years

**d. This is incorrect as RHITs have to become recertified.**

15. Which group is responsible for AHIMA’s certification exams?

**a. CCHIIM**

b. AHIMA House of Delegates

c. AHIMA Board of Directors

d. CAHIIM

16. State College is applying for accreditation of the new HIM program. How long do they have to complete their candidacy?

a. 1 year

**b. 2 years**

c. 4 years

d. 5 years

17. The two components of AHIMA’s management structure are which of the following?

a. Staff and team

b. Team and committee

c. Staff and volunteer

**d. Volunteer and council**

18. An RHIT who graduated from college 6 months ago is joining AHIMA for the first time. What membership is he or she qualified for?

a. Student

b. Emeritus

c. New graduate

**d. Active**

19. Critique this statement: an RHIT must be at least 65 years old in order to qualify for emeritus membership.

**a. This is a true statement.**

b. This is a false statement because the member must be at least 60 years old to qualify.

c. This is a false statement because the member must be at least 70 years old to qualify.

d. This is a false statement because the member must be at least 55 years old to qualify.

20. The requirement for an HIM professional to comply with all laws, regulations, and standards governing the practice of HIM is in the AHIMA \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. Mission

b. Vision

**c. Code of ethics**

d. Engage

21. The accountability framework and decision rights to achieve enterprise information management is known as:

a. Credential

**b. Information governance**

c. Certification

d. Registration

22. Prior to hospital standardization, health records were:

a. Valuable tools

b. Strong communication methods

c. Complete documentation of patient care

**d. Essentially worthless**

23. The number of charter members of the ARLNA was:

a. 35

b. 17

**c. 58**

d. 82

24. To be recognized as a profession, which of the following did HIM need?

a. Certification

b. Registration

**c. Preliminary training**

d. Accreditation

25. The emphasis on traditional practice of HIM was to ensure:

**a. Complete and accurate health record**

b. Valid certification exams

c. Retrieval of the health record for patient care

d. Management of information