Education: The Pathway to Leadership in HIM

Vice President of Health Information Exchange. Chief Knowledge Officer. Vice President of Information Governance. Vice President of Patient Advocacy. Vice President of Corporate Information Management. These are just some of the emerging leadership roles that may be available to HIM practitioners in the future.

Yet the road to higher responsibility—and higher paychecks—is still rough and winding for many in HIM. “A big issue facing HIM professionals is defining their pathway to healthcare leadership roles in the C-Suite,” says Cindy Zak, MS, RHIA, PMP, FAHIMA, corporate director of HIM at Yale New Haven Health in New Haven, CT. To better define that pathway to leadership, the AHIMA Foundation’s Council for Excellence in Education (CEE) has been developing a plan for the future of HIM education and the broader profession called Reality 2016.

Reality 2016 grew out of Vision 2016, the original blueprint to help prepare HIM professionals for tomorrow’s technology-intense workplace. Even today, there is a growing need for leadership at every level in HIM, says Zak, a current member of AHIMA’s Board of Directors, who helped develop Reality 2016 while serving on the CEE. Reality 2016 focuses on four key strategies:

- Increasing the number of HIM professionals who have graduate degrees
- Enhancing the HIM associate degree through specialization
- Developing more HIM program faculty
- Increasing the workforce with additional qualified HIM practitioners

The Value of Education

One of the tenets of Reality 2016 is the link between education and advancement. “Education opens doors,” says Valerie Watzlaf, PhD, RHIA, FAHIMA, associate professor at the University of Pittsburgh HIM Department in Pittsburgh, PA, and current chair of the CEE. “When I received my doctorate, people asked me if I could help them with research grants and other projects, and I do not think they would have done that if I did not have that level of education. The same is true at the master’s level—an advanced degree will open up more leadership positions.” Trends from the latest environmental scan report, published by AHIMA’s House of Delegates’ Envisioning Collaborative, back up this idea. The report notes that advanced and specialized education will help improve the HIM profession’s prominence and enable HIM practitioners to take on leadership positions in their organizations.

Besides opening doors, advanced degrees also lead to higher salaries for HIM professionals. A recent AHIMA salary survey found that for every degree earned, HIM professionals make an average of $15,830 more per year.

Matching Students’ Skills to Employers’ Needs

The CEE has drafted revised curriculum maps that educators may use to ensure that associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degree programs meet current workforce needs. The proposed maps include more course content on leadership, critical thinking, business and data analytics, and informatics, among other areas. Input from workforce leaders and widespread vetting of the curricula ensure that HIM students are prepared to assume positions in the changing HIM market.

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Go ahead, admit you daydream about fully integrated coding solutions.

With ICD-10 fast approaching, yearning for a seamless, integrated solution for all your coding and clinical documentation improvement needs is perfectly natural. And now it’s perfectly achievable, thanks to Optum, the healthcare leader and pioneer of the computer-assisted coding industry. Our patented LifeCode® NLP engine is the superior technology at the heart of our comprehensive platform, helping healthcare professionals work more simply, accurately and efficiently.

To learn more about how Enterprise CAC has helped other hospitals, visit us at www.optum.com/EnterpriseCAC. Email: perform@optum.com Phone: 866.322.0958
Many HIM programs are already updating their curricula to include more content on strategic planning, organizational development, project management, change management, critical thinking, and other hot topics. For example, the HIM program at Pitt has added a number of new courses on cloud computing, HIT, and telemedicine. They have also incorporated more on leadership and data analytics throughout their graduate curriculum.

Other HIM programs like the one at Coppin State University in Baltimore, MD, plan to introduce a master’s level program in the next few years. The graduate program at Coppin State will include a second-year track that will allow students to specialize in public health, informatics, quality improvement, and other areas, says Mona Calhoun, MS, RHIA, FAHIMA, chairman of the HIM program. “HIM leaders need to have the same leadership skills as CEOs,” says Calhoun, former chair of the CEE who helped move Vision 2016 to Reality 2016. “They need to be able to strategize with others, collaborate on the overall organizational budget, and be well versed in leadership so they can advocate for the profession.”

Besides working with HIM programs to ensure that students’ skills meet the needs of the HIM industry, the Foundation has also being making more scholarships available to undergraduates and graduates. In addition, the Foundation is working with government agencies such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics to revise its definition of HIM. The goal: to redefine the HIM profession as a strategic and leadership role—not just a technical one.

If You Want to Pursue a New Degree

- Explore the HIM career map. This interactive tool is valuable for new and experienced HIM professionals to discover career opportunities.

- Choose a degree that mirrors your interests. While a graduate degree in health informatics or HIM can solidify your career path, consider where your interests lie. Is it business? Organizational development? Public health? Choose a degree that will engage you.

- Inquire with your employer about financial support. Some organizations will cover part or all of your tuition and books as you pursue a degree in your field.

- Apply for a scholarship through your component state association (CSA) or the Foundation. In 2012, the Foundation awarded $92,500 in scholarships. This year, the Foundation will award its first $10,000 scholarship to a veteran or spouse of a veteran.

- Investigate paid assistantships. Many HIM programs offer stipends for students to work in the HIM department while they go to school.

- After you receive your master’s degree and have achieved 10 years of HIM experience, apply to become an AHIMA Fellow.

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To Build Leadership Skills Without Going Back to School

- **Assess your strengths and weaknesses.** AHIMA offers a [leadership competencies self-assessment](#) that member-volunteers can use to gauge their skills in nine different areas, such as strategic planning, team leadership, and negotiation skills.

- **Be the first to raise your hand in your organization.** “Leverage the ICD-10 transition,” says Bonnie Cassidy, MPA, RHIA, FAHIMA, FHIMSS, senior director of HIM innovation at Nuance Communications, Inc., Burlington, MA, and former chair of AHIMA’s Board. “Your organization needs you, and you can grow from providing education and leadership on ICD-10.”

- **Pursue a certification.** Make yourself more marketable with a certification in [health data analysis](#) or [privacy and security](#).

- **Volunteer** for AHIMA Foundation’s [CEE](#). Members can get involved in one of six workgroups. Or lend your expertise to your local [component state association](#) or at the national level with the [House of Delegates](#).

- **Shadow** a leader in your organization. Observing a leader in action can help you understand the “intangibles” of leadership.

- **Seek out a paid apprenticeship.** AHIMA has developed national guidelines for apprenticeship standards around some of the fastest-growing jobs in HIM, such as business analysts and data analysts.

- **Visit the new AHIMA [Engage](#) communities weekly to initiate or comment on discussions about leadership.**

- **Learn to influence others** through the [AHIMA Advocacy Center](#).

- **Become an AHIMA [mentor or mentee](#)** (click on “mentorship”). Working with or as a mentor can help you gain insight to advance your leadership skills and career. Do not just look inside your own organization, Cassidy advises. “Talk to your vendors—they come from a variety of roles and can offer great advice.”

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**LEARN MORE**

Want to improve your leadership and strategic skills? Here are some of AHIMA’s resources in the [AHIMA Body of Knowledge](#) (BoK), the [AHIMA Store](#), and online at ahima.org. (Have your AHIMA login and password ready; some are free, while others are available for purchase.)

- **Books and eBooks**—Some recommended titles available in the AHIMA Bookstore include:
  - *Health Information Management Staff Transformation Toolkit*
  - *Effective Management of Coding Services*
  - *Leadership on the Line*
  - *The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at All Levels*
  - *Principles of Finance for Health Information and Informatics Professionals*

- **Journal of AHIMA Articles**—The BoK includes hundreds of *Journal of AHIMA* articles on how education can transform the HIM profession, including “Taking the Doctoral Challenge: Educators Push HIM Professionals to Add PhD to Credentials,” and “Focus on the Future: Environmental Scan Illuminates the Path Ahead for HIM.” You can also read about “The Next Frontier: Population Health Information Management Presents a New Opportunity for HIM.”

- **iVolunteer**—This quarterly newsletter provides useful resources on effective leadership and volunteer opportunities.

- **2013 AHIMA Convention and Exhibit**—The event will be held October 26–30, 2013, at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, GA, and will feature a Professional Development and Career Center and a Health Innovation Leadership Series open to all convention registrants.

- **AHIMA CourseShare**—This free, online library of learning tools includes lectures, case studies, and handouts for HIM educators (AHIMA ID required).

- **AHIMA Foundation Resources**
  - **Webinars**—Upcoming [webinars](#) cover a variety of topics, including curriculum maps and project management.
  - **Academic Advisor**—This bimonthly, members-only newsletter covers a variety of topics for educators.
  - **Journals**—The Foundation publishes two peer-reviewed research [journals](#) on educational and workforce issues.
  - **Scholarships**—Support your fellow HIM professionals by [making a gift](#) to the AHIMA Foundation.
Lifelong Learner Returns to His Medical Roots with HIM

Alan Soskel, RHIA, could have continued to pursue one of the many career paths he has already succeeded at—biomedical engineering, publishing, or online retail. But as many have recognized, particularly those with a healthcare background like Soskel, the field of HIM is full of opportunities for anyone who has done their research.

And as it happens, research is something Soskel, who lives in Alpharetta, GA, excels at. He graduated from Tulane University with a BS in biomedical engineering, where he wrote his honor’s thesis on the “Biomechanics of Bone.” After college, he worked as a technical support engineer for E.I. DuPont, managing a 50+ hospital territory in New York and New Jersey. He trained laboratory technicians and managers on Automatic Clinical Analyzers, a device that analyzed blood, serum, and other fluids. “I was in and out of hospitals every day, in chemistry labs, maintained my own schedule, trained lab managers and lab technicians. But, then after six years I got the entrepreneurial bug,” Soskel says.

His entrepreneurial spirit led him to launch an Internet and catalog business selling upscale, made-to-order cat and dog furniture. He also explored the media world, working as a pre-production project director for Great Southern Publishers. But while Soskel says he was successful in all of his professional pursuits, he felt like he had reached a plateau. Most of all, he missed his medical roots and wanted to stay in the Atlanta area.

Finding the Path to HIM

Soskel conducted his own analysis of the biomedical device market in and around Atlanta and concluded that there was a much stronger healthcare provider and vendor base. He then made the decision to go back to school, to the Medical College of Georgia (now Georgia Regents University), and graduated in May of 2013 with his BS in health information administration, earning his RHIA certification shortly thereafter. While pursuing his HIA degree, Soskel realized his coursework combined several of his professional interests.

“At the Medical College of Georgia, in my management principles HR management courses, a light bulb went off because it took me back to my management days and the businesses [I started] and everything clicked together. I have an appreciation for everything that entails being a good manager now,” Soskel says.

Alan Soskel is not afraid to try new things, especially in his newest profession, HIM.

Award-winning Presentation

While Soskel looks for a full-time HIM job, he’s not wasting any time. He recently won AHIMA’s Council for Excellence in Education student e-presentation contest for his presentation called “The Human Aspect to Creating Work Process Flow Charts: Asking the Right Questions.” It was presented at AHIMA’s Assembly on Education meeting in July 2013.

This presentation was based on one of the projects he completed for his senior practicum, about how to use flow charts to document work processes. The project involved interviewing multiple HIM professionals in order to create 11 different work process flow charts.

“The hard part was interviewing the staff and really trying to get all the info you needed out of them. Not just their day-to-day functions, but all the problems they encountered… So my presentation was on the human aspect of creating these work process flow charts,” he says.

Soskel says his biggest interest in HIM is the electronic health record (EHR) and the huge security and privacy issues surrounding EHRs. He says, ideally, “For the second half of my career, I just want to progress with a leading company. As to what I’m looking for one would be management or supervisory role, either entry level or mid-level, with a provider, physician practice, or vendor,” Soskel says.

To stay current with the industry, Soskel is volunteering in the neuropsychology and medical records departments at Children’s Healthcare in Atlanta. Additionally, he has completed two internships in the HIM departments at Piedmont Hospital and DeKalb Medical Center.

When he’s not volunteering, Soskel stays up to date by conducting his own independent HIM industry research. Currently he is compiling a set of HIM work performance standards. As such, he invites HIM managers and directors to contact him if they are interested in contributing to his project. To read more about Soskel and his research, visit his website at www.alan-soskel-rhia.com.
Plan to Attend the Volunteer Session at Annual Convention

On October 29, from 3:15–4:15 p.m., plan to attend a volunteer session during the AHIMA Annual Convention to receive an overview and introduction of the appointed and elected opportunities that are available at the national level of AHIMA, and the nomination process. Members will be able to review and submit a nomination form online via the "Application to Serve." There will also be a Q&A session facilitated by the AHIMA Nominating Committee. Current and former AHIMA Board and Committee Members will be on hand to share their volunteer experiences at the national level.

House of Delegates Meeting at Annual Convention

The House of Delegates will hold its annual meeting on October 27 from 8 a.m.–5 p.m., prior to the AHIMA Annual Convention and Exhibit. This year’s agenda will cover topics such as, environmental scanning, alignment of work with the Practice Councils, and advocacy. For updated information on the meeting agenda, materials and resources, please visit the 2013 HoD Meeting topic site located here. The new delegate term will offer more opportunities for the HoD to continue further alignment with the work of the Practice Councils, and with additional task forces to be rolled out throughout the year. The delegates will have greater options and opportunities to be involved and engaged. Look for more announcements and information on the State Leaders and House of Delegates community on our new Engage site located here. We look forward to seeing everyone in Atlanta.

Apply to become an AHIMA Fellow

Fellows of AHIMA are members who have earned recognition for their significant and sustained contributions to the profession. The AHIMA Fellowship Review Committee meets quarterly. The next application deadline is December 2. Learn more about eligibility requirements and complete the fellowship application. You can also view a full list of AHIMA fellows. Learn more about the work of the AHIMA Fellowship Committee in the “Real World” column of this issue of AHIMA Advantage.

ACE Program Sunsets

After six years, the Action Community for Excellence (ACE) program will be sunsetting. Originally started as a program to recognize innovative members ahead of the curve in EHR implementation and those who needed their expertise, ACE grew to over 800 members and expanded membership to subject matter experts in a variety of topics. As AHIMA moves to become more agile to member needs, ACE has fulfilled its purpose and has many accomplishments for which to be proud. We are fortunate to have so many dedicated members and we thank you for all your work to support ACE and the profession. Click here for the full list of ACE members.

New Resume Webinar Available

Check out AHIMA's newest Career Prep webinar, “Resumes for Results: Get That Interview!” This webinar was facilitated by career coach Lyne Tumilson, CAE. Tumilson gives tips on how to create an effective resume that will have potential employers scrambling to meet you. To review this archived session, please click here. Please contact Jessica Heraty with any questions.

New Clinical Documentation for ICD-10 Training Supports Time-pressed Physicians

AHIMA’s online Clinical Documentation for ICD-10: Principles and Practice provides an overview and bite-sized, self-paced training modules that doctors can access anytime, from a computer, tablet, or mobile device. Written by physicians, CDI specialists, and medical coding experts, the program customizes learning by delivering three-to-five-minute modules that cover each task force to be rolled out throughout the year. The delegates will have greater options and opportunities to be involved and engaged. Look for more announcements and information on the State Leaders and House of Delegates Community in Engage. We look forward to seeing everyone in Atlanta.

Members Find Success at Virtual Career Fair

Thank you to the job seekers and employers who participated in AHIMA's first Virtual Career Fair in August. AHIMA's online job bank, Career Assist, is available for job seekers and employers at any time. Also, learn more about the Professional Development/Career Center October 29 at AHIMA's annual Convention in Atlanta.
AHIMA Welcomes New Student Members
This fall, as students settle back into the classroom and kick off new online coursework, changes to the AHIMA student member category present new opportunities. With a bylaws update this summer, students in HIM-related programs outside of those accredited by CAHIIM or approved by PCAP/ACCP are now also able to take advantage of the bargain dues rate of $35. This widens the pool to now welcome students in programs such as informatics, HIT, CDI, and others. As the field continues to grow and expand, AHIMA continues to support those who are studying and preparing to lead HIM into the future. Visit ahima.org/membership for more details.

HITECH Final Rule Compliant: Now What?
The impact of the HITECH Final Rule will continue after the compliance date as privacy and security principles pervade every aspect of health information. Every day, privacy and security officers must balance the confidentiality issues of healthcare reform, technology, and workflow accommodations with the complexities of regulatory disparity and laws such as HIPAA and ARRA/HITECH. Explore key points for evolving privacy and security programs in a continually changing industry by attending AHIMA’s Privacy and Security Institute, October 26-27, in Atlanta, GA. Participants will learn from industry experts investigating critical privacy and security topics such as mobile device management and breaches. Join us for this advanced-level meeting to expand your knowledge and stay abreast of the hottest privacy and security trends today. Register today.

Fall 2013 Issue of Perspectives Now Available
The Fall 2013 issue of AHIMA’s research journal, Perspectives in Health Information Management, is now available. One article describes an approach to creating a digital questionnaire and the results of analyzing family history data while a second study explores the accuracy of capturing comorbidities associated with the Elixhauser Comorbidity Measure in patients with chronic heart failure at one Veterans Affairs medical center. Read the complete issue and learn more about submission guidelines. Look for the Winter 2014 issue of Perspectives in January.

New Publications from AHIMA Press Now Available
by Lynn M. Kuehn, MS, RHIA, CCS-P, FAHIMA, and Therese M. Jorwic, MPH, RHIA, CCS, CCS-P, FAHIMA

Principles of Finance for Health Information and Informatics Professionals
by Susan White, PhD, CHDA

A Practical Approach to Analyzing Healthcare Data, Second Edition
by Susan White, PhD, CHDA

Introduction to Health Information Privacy & Security
by Laurie A. Rinehart-Thompson, JD, RHIA, CHP, FAHIMA

Introduction to Healthcare Informatics
by Susan H. Fenton, PhD, RHIA, FAHIMA, and Sue Biedermann, MSHP, RHIA, FAHIMA

HIT or Miss: Lessons Learned from Health Information Technology Implementations, Second Edition
by Jonathan Leviss, MD

In Memoriam
Sarah J. Mullins, RHIA, of Longmont, CO, passed away in August 2013.

Vickie L. Rogers, MS, RHIA, FAHIMA, died in July. A longtime HIM professional specializing in coding and reimbursement issues, Rogers was head of V.L. Rogers and Associates. In 2002 she authored the AHIMA book Applying Inpatient Coding Skills Under Prospective Payment. She received the Ohio HIMA Distinguished Member award in 1992.
Ensuring standardized principles in the wake of electronic health records (EHRs) and rapid adoption of health information technology has been challenging for the healthcare industry. Common concerns include the lack of necessary functions and important information and informatics standards in electronic systems. Increasingly the new functionality that electronic systems bring to records management has added a layer of complexity to ensuring the quality, accuracy and integrity of the data and documentation comprising the record of care. Authoritative standardization is a useful pathway to enforce HIM principles and practices.

AHIMA is actively involved in the development and use of standards generated by Health Level Seven (HL7), International Health Terminology Standards Development Organization, ISO/TC 215 Health Informatics (standards and harmonization), and WHO-FIC (ICD-10 and ICD-11) in addition to standards development activities specific to the United States due to the exchange of health information requirements. Global standards are on the rise to enable worldwide applicability to achieve the goal of access to health information when it is needed for care or business.

Standards Activities Needed to Ensure Health Record Management

Throughout the EHR adoption and implementation significant time and resources have been applied to the technology aspect. However, less attention is being paid to the information management aspect for the transformation of healthcare. There is a lack of clarity about digital information management requirements. EHRs in a digital world demand precise clinical and business information. It is critical that HIM professionals provide guidelines and a framework for an information asset management strategy in the healthcare enterprise.

Using AHIMA’s core model as a guide, HIM professionals must work with standards development organization (SDOs) to develop authoritative standards that advance HIM practice in new system environments. This is accomplished by creating uniform approaches to interoperability at the technical and semantic level. The use of standards reduces costs, supports data integrity, and supports the transfer of information to support care.

HIM professionals have the opportunity to influence standards through engagement in the various SDOs or inclusion of standards in their EHR systems. The ability to ensure appropriate use of standards has been lacking; making it imperative to strive for change and assurance for high-quality results. The HIM domains are critical to creating reliable and safe electronic documentation standards.

Standards Essential to HIM Activities

There are a number of ways AHIMA members can contribute to standardization for improved EHR management.

- HL7 has a variety of work groups that HIM professionals may join to contribute to messaging and technical standards. AHIMA has secured leadership roles in projects such as the EHR Records Management and Evidentiary Support Project and a recently added project for Usability of the EHR.
- AHIMA holds the ANSI Designated Secretariat for the ISO/TC for Health Informatics. New projects and standards revisions that involve health information standards are being addressed through the ISO process. Currently, the Privacy, Patient Safety, and Security workgroup is developing a technical report for the components of education to ensure health information privacy.
- AHIMA also serves as the administrator of the United States Technical Advisory Group (US TAG). This group advises and develops voting positions for the United States related to health informatics standards for advancement.
- There are opportunities to contribute to standardization through the US Office of the National Coordinator (ONC). Recently a new workgroup for Data Access has formed under the Standards and Interoperability (S&I) Framework. This group is charged with harmonizing interoperability specifications to support national goals for improved patient outcomes, population health management, and other healthcare initiatives.

Get Involved

There are many ways for HIM professionals to participate, from full membership to joining a workgroup or sub-workgroup. Joining a subgroup and participating in the discussions is the grassroots effort that is needed to ensure record integrity and HIM principles are placed at the forefront. As HIM professionals engage in this work, AHIMA will be able to network companies in healthcare to inform the industry of the importance of HIM standards requirements in the digital age.

AHIMA is well respected in the standards community across the globe; therefore all HIM professionals are encouraged be involved with standards development and advancement to advocate for our profession and our association to ensure integrity and reliability of HIM in electronic environments. More HIM professionals are needed to ensure integrity and reliability of health information management in electronic environments.
AHIMA Student Members: Plan Now to Get the Most Out of the 2013 Convention

Attending the AHIMA convention is an exciting experience for students and professionals alike. AHIMA student members receive the benefit of a discounted registration fee as well as free access to Student Academy—an interactive, educational session focused on student topics such as starting a career in HIM, getting certified, and making the most out of the convention experience. Attendees will get to hear from AHIMA’s President, Angela Kennedy, EdD, MBA, RHIA, CPHQ, as well as Mollie Pillman, MS-HSM, CSSBB, RHIA, senior director of executive operations at AHIMA. There is also an opportunity to meet with AHIMA mentors during lunch to ask questions and get advice on how to start your career or enhance your HIM experience.

The Road to Convention

We realize that traveling to the AHIMA convention can still be expensive. However, at the University of Illinois at Chicago, students may be eligible for travel grant funds through Student Council or through an alumni donation fund. Others have taken the route of fundraising to cover the costs of travel and hotel. Cody Caplinger of the University of Pittsburgh helped his school attain funds by setting up fundraisers starting as soon as the program began last fall. These included a candle sale, bake sale, raffle tickets toward a local pizza shop gift card, and even a popcorn sale, using a professional Pittsburgh popcorn company based on campus. At Arkansas Technical University, funds have been raised in the past through an annual golf tournament. The College of St. Scholastica held a used prom dress sale and hosted a fundraiser at local restaurants for a percentage of sales.

Once at convention, students can really take advantage of all that the event has to offer, including educational seminars, training opportunities, mentoring, and networking. Shelby Osterrieder of the University of Pittsburgh says she’s most excited for networking opportunities. “I think it will be a huge help to my future career plans to learn about other companies and meet other RHIA’s. We are also attending a Pitt alumni dinner, which will be another great opportunity to meet people.” The students from Pitt will be attending the Student Academy, at least one session a day as a group, and whichever sessions they would like to attend as individuals. Caplinger is excited to hear more about the outlook of HIM. “We’re hoping to learn what the possibilities are for us after graduation. Living in Pittsburgh, we’re constantly exposed to the direct healthcare aspect of everything, what we can be doing in a hospital, but rarely do we see what else there is for us to do.”

The Three Fs of Convention

Scott MacKenzie, CAE, senior director of member engagement and strategy at AHIMA, offers this advice for students who are attending Convention for the first time. “I have shared with students in the past my three rules of engagement for the AHIMA convention: fun, friends, and future. There is a ton to see and experience at an industry show like this.”

“Part of the key is to enjoy it and not get overwhelmed. You can’t do it all, so prioritizing the sessions and events you most want to see really helps,” MacKenzie said. “The chance to be in the same room with 100 other HIM students from around the country and several thousand HIM professionals is one you won’t get every day; so take advantage of it and meet people and make friends that you will see in the years to come. Last, you are building your future. Between the exhibit hall, the speakers, and the countless educational sessions, all aspects of the industry are represented. The future is bright, and getting a sense or where you want to head will send you back home with a lot of energy and optimism.”

This year’s Student Academy will take place on October 27 from 10 a.m.–3 p.m. To attend, register for Convention as an AHIMA Student Member. RSVP information for the event will follow.
AHIMA Members Are Engaged with Engage

The reviews are in—AHIMA’s new Engage Online Communities site is a hit with AHIMA members and nonmembers alike. The newest iteration of AHIMA’s communities of practice site has been completely revisited and reworked to provide a smoother, fuller, and more robust social media experience for AHIMA’s members and the healthcare field at large. Within days of Engage’s launch, 1,343 unique log-ins were recorded, with 112 new nonmembers signing up.

“Engage offers a great new online discussion forum for AHIMA members and nonmembers to discuss health information management (HIM) issues, best practices, and much more,” reports AHIMA staff member and senior manager Sheryl Reyes. “It’s an easy-to-use tool that allows both members and nonmembers to connect and expand their professional network based on common backgrounds or interests.”

Engage features both private (open only to volunteer committee and AHIMA members) and public communities (accessible to both AHIMA members and other HIM professionals). The newly designed public communities are organized by specifically defined HIM domains, reflecting strategically aligned content and forums. The new communities’ titles are:

- Coding, Classification and Reimbursement
- Confidentiality, Privacy and Security
- Consumer Engagement and Personal Health Information
- Health Informatics
- Health Information Technologies and Processes
- Healthcare Leadership and Innovation
- Information Governance and Standards

The site itself presents a cleaner look to facilitate navigation; makes it easier to store, tag, and search for HIM resources; and enables users to set up a profile (LinkedIn profiles are easily uploaded to your Engage profile page) and start communicating, right away. The members-only directory also permits AHIMA members to immediately connect and network with fellow members who share similar job histories and educational backgrounds. Explore these and other features at the Engage site by visiting engage.ahima.org. The Help page is a great resource for any questions that may arise, as are these useful video tutorials.

AHIMA also encourages web-surfers to visit the all-new and recently launched Association website (ahima.org). The site has experienced similar “re-engineering” to provide a new color scheme and layout that accommodates intuitive navigation, and programming that permits faster and more comprehensive searches, generating more relevant results. The new ahima.org has drawn more than 130,289 unique visitors and recorded 221,654 site visits since its August 20 launch.

And look forward to the autumn launch of the updated HIM Body of Knowledge (BoK), AHIMA’s searchable, online repository of resources covering HIM theory and practice. Expect easier access to HIM topics of interest, enhanced functionality, and an improved design.

The 85th AHIMA Convention and Exhibit will be both a proving and training ground demonstrating Engage’s versatility and vitality. Attendees can look forward to a roster of eye-opening events:

Engage Online Community Demonstrations
Location: AHIMA Booth, #760
Hands-on demonstrations at the AHIMA booth in the exhibit hall. Have a question? Stop by during exhibit hours. Demonstrations are tailored for general users and facilitators.

October 27
Engage Communities Meet-Up
Location: AHIMA Booth, #760
6–7 p.m.
Meet fellow Engage community members, put a face with a name, and learn more about AHIMA’s new community site.

October 28 and 29
Get Engaged with AHIMA Communities—Networking Room
Location: Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC)—A306
9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Meet and greet fellow Engage community members in person at one of these events.

“I do like the overall look.” • “Love it!” • “Awesome!”

“Ca TCH uP WiTH CommuniTieS”
**HIT-Pro Credentials Convert to AHIMA CHTS Credentials**

The Commission on Certification for Health Informatics and Information Management (CCHIIM) announced that HIT-Pro exams will convert to AHIMA Certified Healthcare Technology Specialist (CHTS) credentials, effective July 29, 2013. See Table 1 for a breakdown of the credential conversion.

**What are CHTS credentials?**

CHTS exams assess competency of health IT professionals related to implementation and management of electronic health information in the same manner as HIT-Pro exams. Six exams measure competency related to:

- Assessing workflows
- Selecting hardware and software
- Working with vendors
- Installing and testing systems
- Diagnosing IT problems
- Training staff on systems

**Are exam specifications changing?**

Exam blueprints, number of questions, and distribution of questions in each domain will not change.

**What are the standards for recertification?**

Recertification for CHTS credentials is mandatory to maintain credential(s) and standards for recertification are outlined below.

**How many CEUs are required?**

See Table 2 for information on completion of acceptable CEUs.

**Is there a fee for recertifying and reporting?**

CHTS certificants will be charged a fee for reporting CEUs. Additional information regarding fees is forthcoming.

**What is the reporting and recertifying deadline?**

Continuing education (CE) activities must be reported to AHIMA by March 31, 2016. Participants who are not audited will receive a CEU Validation Certificate as evidence of meeting CEU requirements. To be eligible for CE credit, CE activities must be completed between January 1, 2013, and December 31, 2015.

Multiple credential holders (certificants holding multiple AHIMA credentials) must earn 10 additional CEUs per credential (requirements not to exceed 60 CEUs).

**Why earn and maintain CHTS credentials?**

CHTS credentials offer:

- Increased opportunities
- Validation of expertise and knowledge
- Preparation for changes in healthcare and IT
- Personal and professional development
- Confirmation of skills endorsed by AHIMA

E-mail CHTS@ahima.org with questions. Find information including exam blueprints and a candidate guide here.

**Coding Self-Reviews**

AHIMA-certified coders must complete an annual coding self-review in order to maintain their credential. Self-reviews are available online at the AHIMA Store. If an AHIMA coding credential was earned in 2013, a self-review is not required until 2014. Contact AHIMA at (800) 335-5535 with questions or to submit a customer request.

**ICD-10 CEU Reminder**

CCHIIM’s recertification policy for ICD-10-CM/PCS is designed to help prepare AHIMA certified professionals, and applies to AHIMA credential(s) as follows.

**ICD-10-CM/PCS CEU Requirements**

- CHPS—1 CEU
- CHDA—6 CEUs
- RHIT—6 CEUs
- RHIA—6 CEUs
- CCS-P—12 CEUs
- CDIP—12 CEUs
- CCS—18 CEUs
- CCA—18 CEUs

CEUs can be recorded via the online CEU Center in the ICD-10 domain. These CEUs apply to ICD-10 recertification requirements; however, CEUs reported in other domains cannot be applied towards this requirement. Find more information here.

**CCHIIM ICD-10 Exam Launch Timeline**

- CCA—Late March 2014
- RHIA, RHIT, CCS, and CCSP—April 2014
- CDIP—July 2014
- CHPA and CHDA—January 2015

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**Table 1: Credential Conversion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIT-Pro Credential</th>
<th>AHIMA Credential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIT-Pro–Clinician/Practitioner Consultant (HIT-Pro–CP)</td>
<td>CHTS-CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIT-Pro–Practice Workflow and Information Management Redesign Specialist (HIT-Pro–PW)</td>
<td>CHTS-PW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIT-Pro–Implementation Manager (HIT-Pro–IM)</td>
<td>CHTS-IM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIT-Pro–Implementation Support Specialist (HIT-Pro–IS)</td>
<td>CHTS-IS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIT-Pro–Technical/Software Support Staff (HIT-Pro–TS)</td>
<td>CHTS-TS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIT-Pro–Trainer (HIT-Pro–TR)</td>
<td>CHTS-TR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Requirements for Completion of Acceptable CEUs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credential</th>
<th>Required CEUs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certified Healthcare Technology Specialist—Clinician/Practitioner Consultant (CHTS–CP)</td>
<td>20 CEUs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Healthcare Technology Specialist—Practice Workflow and Information Management Redesign Specialist (CHTS–PW)</td>
<td>20 CEUs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Healthcare Technology Specialist—Implementation Manager (CHTS–IM)</td>
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<td>20 CEUs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Joseph F. Coughlin to Present the 2013 “Thought Leaders” Lecture

The AHIMA Foundation announces the 2013 Thought Leaders lecture series presenter, Joseph F. Coughlin, PhD. Coughlin will speak at the 85th AHIMA Convention & Exhibit, in Atlanta, GA, during the general session on October 29. Coughlin is founder and director of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology AgeLab. Coughlin’s research focuses on how the convergence of baby boomer expectations and technology will shape the future of public policy and drive innovation across global industries—including the financial services, transportation, foods, insurance, health, IT, telecommunications, and retail sectors. Coughlin has published his work in a variety of business, engineering, product design, behavioral science and policy journals.

The Thought Leaders lecture series was established by the AHIMA Foundation to offer HIM professionals—including corporate executives and AHIMA members—the opportunity to engage with industry and opinion leaders on thought-provoking and cutting-edge topics.

The Thought Leaders Lecture Series was made possible through the generous philanthropic support of both Healthport and Precyse.

Learn more about Dr. Coughlin and the Thought Leaders Lecture Series at the AHIMA Foundation website.

AHIMA Foundation Acknowledges Memorial Gifts

In addition to the donors who support the Kathleen A. Frawley Memorial Endowed Scholarship, the following memorial gifts were made to the AHIMA Foundation between July 10 and September 10 and we wish to recognize these donations.

In Memory of Elizabeth B. Anderson
Western Pennsylvania Health Information Management Association

In Memory of Betty M. DeWitt, RHIA
Northeastern Pennsylvania Health Information Management Association

In Memory of Rita M. Finnegan, RHIA, CCS
April L. Martin, CMT, AHDI-F, RHIA

In Memory of Charlotte Johnson
Kimberley K. Hazelton, RHIA
Jennifer B. McCollum, RHIA, CCS

In Memory of Kathleen McCaffrey, RHIA
LaVonne R. LaMoureaux, CAE, RHIA

In Memory of Carmen Mercer
Mona Y. Calhoun, MS, RHIA

In Memory of Barbara Penn
Henryetta M. Wynne, RHIT

In Memory of Vickie L. Rogers, RHIA, FAHIMA
Bonnie S. Cassidy, MPA, RHIA, FAHIMA, FHIMSS
First Class Solutions, Inc.

In Memory of Geraldine Smothers, MPA, RHIA, CPHQ, CSL, FAHIMA
Diann H. Brown Smith, RHIA, CHP
Ramping Up for Advocacy at the 2013 Convention

The 85th AHIMA National Convention and Exhibit in Atlanta, GA, is just a few short weeks away. Staff and members alike are hastily preparing for their trek to the sunny south to discuss all things HIM with their fellow HIM professionals. Leadership Through Advocacy will once again be featured in two important forums: the Advocacy Through Leadership educational session and the AHIMA House of Delegates meeting.

On October 26 from 1–5 p.m. at the AHIMA headquarters hotel, The Omni, representatives of the AHIMA Advocacy and Policy Team, the AHIMA Volunteer Leadership Development Team, and the State Advocacy Council will be engaging state leaders, delegates, state advocacy coordinators and other interested parties on AHIMA advocacy services and resources, Advocacy Day planning tips, and promoting the HIM profession through various advocacy activities. The agenda includes:

- 1–1:30 p.m.: Introductions and overview
- 1:30–2:15 p.m.: AHIMA Advocacy Services and Resources
- 2:15–2:45 p.m.: Table Discussion with Report Out: What services and resources would you like to see developed?
- 2:45–3:30 p.m.: Best Practices for Engaging Members in the Profession
- 3:30–4 p.m.: Table Discussion with Report Out: What can you do to establish connections and communicate with other organizations, consumers and policymakers?
- 4–4:45 p.m.: Advocacy Requirements: What are the important things to know about the differences between a 501(c)(3) vs. 501(c)(6) organization?
- 4:45–5 p.m.: Open discussion

These interactive discussions will assist AHIMA's State Advocacy Council and Advocacy and Policy team with reviewing old and developing new advocacy resources for its members and component state associations. We still have some space available so if you are interested in attending the Leadership Through Advocacy Session, please contact AHIMA's Director of Government Relations, Don Asmonga.

Following Saturday's proceedings, the AHIMA House of Delegates will also address advocacy during the afternoon session on October 27. The Sunday session will be a forum to discuss advocacy initiatives undertaken by select component state associations including this year's Core Service Achievement Award winner for advocacy and other top finishers for the award. The award recipient will be announced during the House of Delegates session. Following the announcement, the Core Service Achievement Award winner and multiple entrants will participate in a panel discussion on their activities. This year's Core Service Achievement Award entrants are:

- California HIA
- Florida HIMA
- Illinois HIMA
- Massachusetts HIMA
- Michigan HIMA
- Mississippi HIMA
- Pennsylvania HIMA
- Tennessee HIMA

Following the panel discussion will be an interactive advocacy exercise led by Jennifer McManis, RHIT, speaker-elect, House of Delegates, and Don Asmonga, MBA, CAE, AHIMA's director of government relations. The interactive discussion will focus on advocating for the health information management profession and implementing those communication tactics to increase the visibility of the HIM profession, the component state associations, and AHIMA. We look forward to seeing you in Atlanta in a few weeks and hope that you have to the time to join our advocacy events.

AHIMA's Website Features New Advocacy Resources

If you haven't noticed already, the AHIMA website has been revamped and has a much cleaner and fresher look. The changes to the website have also extended to the AHIMA Advocacy page. Please visit the page and take a look around. You will notice a lot of changes and hopefully will find it much more manageable when searching for advocacy resources. Additionally, we have made it much easier to respond to AHIMA advocacy action alerts including writing to Congress on specific legislative issues. These alerts can be found on the landing page under “Quick Links.”

Over the coming weeks and months, our internal team will continue to build out the site with additional resources. The AHIMA State Advocacy Council is also developing toolkits, brochures and other advocacy materials for the site. If you have any suggestions for advocacy materials, please send your ideas to AHIMA's Director of Government Relations, Don Asmonga.
The AHIMA Fellowship program is a program of earned recognition for AHIMA members who made significant and sustained contributions to the profession. Individuals who earn fellowship may use the designation Fellow of the American Health Information Management Association (FAHIMA), and their names will be maintained in the AHIMA Registry of Fellows.

**Fellowship Program Goals**

The purpose of the Fellowship program is to:

- Recognize significant and sustained contribution to advancement of the HIM discipline through meritorious service, excellence in professional practice, excellence in HIM education, and advancement of the profession through innovation and knowledge sharing.
- Provide an incentive for members to contribute to the advancement of the profession.
- Bring together senior HIM professionals as an organizational resource for continued promotion and development of the profession through a variety of activities.

**Fellowship Application Process**

The Fellowship program has two designations: Fellowship and Candidacy for Fellowship. The eligibility requirements for each can be found on the AHIMA Web site.

The AHIMA Fellowship Committee meets quarterly to review the many Fellowship applications AHIMA receives. The members of this committee ensure the security of the application and scoring process, Fellowship candidacy and Fellow status, as well as identify ways to grow the Fellowship program.

Susan H. Fenton, PhD, RHIA, FAHIMA, 2013 Fellowship Committee Chair, shares her thoughts on this year’s committee work. “Our committee highlights to date this year include establishing an endowed graduate Fellows Scholarship Fund and welcoming 21 new fellows to the program. This year’s committee changed the name from Fellowship Review Committee to the Fellowship Committee to reflect the expansion of our mission from awarding fellowship to launching initiatives whereby fellows can contribute to the wider AHIMA membership.”

New AHIMA Fellow Vanessa A. Duplechain, MSA, RHIA, FAHIMA, said, “What encouraged me to becoming an AHIMA Fellow was to show my testament of my commitment to my profession, my colleagues and my students in HIM.”

Join the ranks of these AHIMA Fellows. Apply to be a Fellow today. The last application deadline for 2013 is December 2.

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**AHIMA Advantage is Now Mobile!**

Download the AHIMA Advantage mobile app to your Apple or Android device and read the newsletter on the go at your convenience.