

talkingpoints

Student Recruitment

AHIMA's Key Message

1. The field of health information management (HIM) offers a high degree of diverse career opportunities, job satisfaction, and security.
2. The high number of available jobs means immediate opportunities for recent graduates, strong prospects for long-term career advancement, and higher than average industry salaries.
3. HIM is an increasingly important part of the healthcare system and the key to advancement is strongly linked to relevant education, leadership skills, and credentials.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Potential Students

OBJECTIVE: Increase enrollment in accredited HIM degree programs in order to advance the profession by preparing future industry leaders

KEY POINTS/FACTS:

What is HIM?

- HIM is a set of professional disciplines, roles, and functions that revolve around information about patients in the healthcare system. Diverse responsibilities include collecting, organizing, codifying, analyzing, and protecting information critical to effective and efficient healthcare delivery
- HIM is where healthcare meets the cutting edge of technology. HIM professionals are earning an increasingly prominent leadership role in ensuring the quality, privacy, and efficiency of clinical information as the healthcare industry moves toward an increasingly electronic and global environment
- The field offers nearly 40 different work settings and more than 200 unique job titles. Here are some examples:

Job specializations:

- Enterprise-wide data and information policy development
- Clinical data quality oversight
- Organizational privacy/security officer
- Documentation Specialist responsible for monitoring accuracy and completeness of electronic and personal health records and other clinical databases
- Organization-wide chief information officer
- Organization-wide clinical coding and revenue cycle management
- Data mining and analytics
- Information access and disclosure specialist, including release of information under HIPAA

Work settings

- Hospitals; physician offices/clinics; skilled-nursing facilities
- Educational institutions
- Government agencies
- Technical vendors
- Insurance companies/HMOs
- Consulting firms

What does it take to become a successful HIM professional?

Education

- You will need formal training from an accredited HIM program at the college level
- AHIMA has 228 accredited programs in HIM
 - 46 baccalaureate degree Health Information Administrator (HIA) programs
 - 182 associate's degree Health Information Technician (HIT) programs
 - In addition, there are two approved master's degree programs in HIM
- If you've already earned a college degree and possess the prerequisites, you can earn a postgraduate certificate or second degree in HIM

Certification

- After completing the HIM educational requirements, the next step is to successfully complete an AHIMA certification exam and receive your professional credentials
- There are two key credentials for professionals in the HIM field:
- RHIA – Registered Health Information Administrator (bachelor's degree required)
- RHIT – Registered Health Information Technician (associate's degree required)

- Other entry-level and mastery-level credentials are also available:
 - CCA – Certified Coding Associate
 - CCS – Certified Coding Specialist
 - CCS-P – Certified Coding Specialist–Physician-based
 - CHP – Certified in Healthcare Privacy
 - CHS – Certified in Healthcare Security (offered jointly with HIMSS)
 - CHPS – Certified in Healthcare Privacy & Security (offered jointly with HIMSS)
- The level of college degree and credential is strongly related to the level of authority and salary

Opportunity

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, each year an estimated 6,000 new HIM positions need to be filled due to industry growth and attrition
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a 49 percent growth in the number of HIM workers by 2010. This statistic is supported by AHIMA's workforce study
- HIM jobs are currently available in all areas of the country and across all credentials according to 90 percent of the respondents to AHIMA's workforce study
- A recent survey shows graduating HIM students are finding jobs:
 - 50 percent of students who reported looking for a job prior to graduating had received at least one job offer and 32 percent of those students had accepted a job prior to graduation
 - Nearly 70 percent of HIM program directors felt that it was easy for their students to find employment
- Median salaries for HIM professionals are competitive and, in many cases, higher than healthcare industry averages
 - RHIA = \$54,700
 - CCS/CCS-P = \$42,500
 - RHIT = \$39,100

Satisfaction

- A recent workforce study conducted by AHIMA shows that HIM professionals are satisfied with their careers
 - A majority of respondents were happy with their career choice
 - 82 percent of respondents plan to stay in the HIM field

How does AHIMA help students?

- AHIMA provides the following resources:
 - Financial aid
 - A list of accredited and approved programs and information on the accreditation process
 - Certification information
 - Distance learning and continuing education opportunities
 - Mentoring
 - *Communities of Practice*—a Web site that offers valuable education and networking tools
 - AHIMA Student Connection e-news—a student newsletter for and by HIM students
- To learn more go to www.ahima.org, or call AHIMA at (312) 233-1100
- You can also get firsthand information on the HIM profession by contacting the Health Information or Medical Records Department at your local hospital or clinic

About the Workforce Study

The AHIMA Workforce Assessment Study was conducted in 2002 by the Center for Health Workforce Studies, School of Public Health, University at Albany, Rensselaer, NY. The researchers conducted independent surveys involving AHIMA members, graduating students, and program directors at accredited education programs as well as case studies at several employers of HIM professionals. The Workforce Assessment Study is funded through AHIMA's Foundation of Research and Education (FORE), and supported in part by a leadership grant from 3M Health Information Systems. Additional grant support has been provided by MedQuist, Inc. and by contributions to FORE from AHIMA's Component State Associations and member gifts.

About AHIMA

AHIMA is the national association of health information management (HIM) professionals. AHIMA's 46,000 members are dedicated to the effective management of personal health information needed to deliver quality healthcare to the public. Founded in 1928 to improve the quality of medical records, AHIMA is committed to advancing the HIM profession in an increasingly electronic and global environment through leadership in advocacy, education, certification, and lifelong learning. For information about the Association, go to www.ahima.org.

REVISED October 16, 2003.