

# Health Information Management

## Part 1

Health Information Management (HIM) is defined as the process of acquisition, analysis, and protection of both traditional and digital medical information that is important for providing quality healthcare services to patients. The process of HIM takes place through a combination of technological tools, good business practices, and scientific integrity.

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is the leading authority pertaining to all aspects of health information, and AHIMA-certified professionals work at ensuring accuracy, accessibility, completeness, and protection of vital patient data. It was established in 1928 as Association of Record Librarians of North America to enhance the standards of acquisition and maintenance of clinical records in healthcare facilities. In 1938, this organization became the American Association of Medical Record Librarians (AAMRL) and it created rigorous standards for the maintenance of health information. In 1970, the organization changed its name to the American Medical Record Association, and by this time healthcare facilities were actively recruiting professionals accredited from this organization to manage their health records. In 1991, the organization acquired its current name of AHIMA and started using data analytics and technology for health records management.

The organization's mission is "Empowering people to impact health". Its vision is to connect people, ideas, and systems through information that can transform health and healthcare on a global level. Its future goals include advancing and advocating for

the creation and usage of health information, growing health information skill sets and competitiveness to shape it into an indispensable profession, and driving renewed growth and strategic transformation in health information workplaces.

AHIMA has set several ethical standards for Clinical Documentation Improvement (CDI) which provides ethical principles and guidelines, and professional values for HIM. According to these standards, the health information should be complete, accurate, and consistent across all health records to allow quality of care and aggregate reporting. All healthcare data elements such as diagnoses, procedure codes, patient safety indicators, and hospital acquired conditions should be complete and accurate as per documentation standards. In case there is inconsistent or ambiguous information, the physician should be queried and the health records should be updated accordingly. A relationship between clinical indicators and diagnosis should also be sought and consistency should be ascertained, in the absence of which, the physician should be queried about the conflict. Health information should never be altered for purposes such as increasing the payable amount, qualifying for health insurance, and skewing data if it does not comply with regional standards.

In the given case scenario, the health information of the patient should be documented conforming to the AHIMA standards. The demographic data of the patient such as name, age, gender, contact number, address, and other such information should be consistent across all test results and other health documents. Consistency between clinical indicators, diagnostic tests, diagnosis, and treatment should be ensured. Finally, the privacy and confidentiality of the data should be ensured and,

under no circumstances, should the patient data be accessible to anyone outside the healthcare facility.

## **Part 2**

The current age is one of a revolution in the area of health information technology which is drastically changing the healthcare profession in terms of data management and health information processes. The introduction of Electronic Health Records (EHR) in the healthcare industry has brought about a massive change in the way health records are handled at healthcare facilities. Apart from EHRs, technologies such as computer-assisted coding, health information exchange, patient portals, and voice recognition software are rapidly modifying several aspects of health information management.

The current healthcare datasets have shown immense promise in enhancing patient care services and providing insights into the current state of healthcare at local as well as national and global levels. Some aspects that have gained momentum currently are health data management, security, privacy and confidentiality, and information exchange. Therefore, exploring the full potential of HIM and acquiring the necessary education, skills, and training is essential to survive as a healthcare services provider in the current age.

Organizations like AHIMA that are invested in enhancing the standards of patient data management have embraced technological innovations in the field and become pioneers in health information systems. These organizations are constantly updating their standards to meet future technological requirements and they have set very high

standards of education and professionalism for people working in this field currently. It is quite evident that demand for healthcare professionals with training and/or accreditation in health data management is bound to increase in the future and knowledge of this area is imperative to acquire and maintain important professional positions in the healthcare industry.

Given the current state of technology and the requirements of the health information industry, there is a considerable pressure on HIM professionals to provide real-time complete and accurate health information at the point of care. Several changes within the healthcare industry are also altering the face of health information management systems and these changes include consumer-driven healthcare, patient-centered care, authorized use of patient data for administrative purposes and quality improvement, financial and strategic planning, and revenue cycle management.

The field of health information management can be considered to be in the middle of a business cycle that can be called “creative destruction”, wherein all the existing technologies and processes are revamped and replaced with newer technologies and processes. A major change here is digitization of all paper records and their conversion to EHRs, and the role of HIM professionals is extremely important in standardizing this process, ensuring all patient records are accurately digitized, and ensuring their confidentiality and security. HIM professionals are also required to increase accessibility to health information by both patients and physicians, and support clinical decision-making, personal health management, research, and financial management. Therefore, the main duties of the health information management industry include ensuring the efficiency of clinical information management, and setting up

systems for data security, privacy, and confidentiality in compliance with documentation and ethical standards. As a result of these technological changes and advancements, it is extremely important for current healthcare providers to understand the changing systems and make themselves adept at managing patient data in accordance with current standards.

## References

AHIMA. (n.d.). *AHIMA Home*. AHIMA. <https://www.ahima.org/>.