

News & Views

November, 2017



NHIMA Contact Information:**Dates to Remember:****Board Members - Committee/TF Chairs**

April 11-13, 2018 – NHIMA Annual Convention, Younes Conference Center, Kearney, NE

President's Message

Welcome Fall! I absolutely love this time of year. I love the fresh, crisp air along with the beautiful colors! Change is definitely upon us as another season approaches. Just like the weather, change in Health Information is also inevitable and upon us each day. There has been some change and activity happening within the NHIMA board of directors.

As many of you know a few months back I had introduced our new Central Office Coordinator, Samantha Kuhlmann. Due to medical reasons, Samantha has resigned from her position as Central Office Coordinator. We have worked diligently to have a smooth transition of the Central Office Coordinator position. Mary Meysenburg has graciously accepted this role and responsibility for NHIMA. Mary is a remarkable addition to the team and brings significant knowledge to the board level. Mary has held various positions on the board of directors in the past for NHIMA. Our previous Central Office Coordinator, Kim, has been absolutely instrumental in helping us through this transition. I sincerely appreciate Kim and my fellow board members for all their hard work and dedication to keep moving NHIMA forward the best we could during this unexpected transition.

In this edition, there are a couple things I would like to touch on. Financials – it continues to be the goal of the board of directors to evaluate ways to be transparent with NHIMA financials more frequently than just the annual convention each year. NHIMA continues to have very strong financials. NHIMA board members have discussed budgeting appropriately to minimize cost where we can so we can look to re-allocate funds to the appropriate education and resources our members need to be successful in the HIM profession. Another opportunity as a board we felt we could make positive impact on behalf of our members was to decrease the number of onsite meetings. Technology allows us to be creative and more efficient when monthly meetings occur. This has allowed us to decrease travel expenses. As a board, it is our goal that we are able to continue to enhance the education and resources that bring high quality value to our members.

This past week was the National Convention in Los Angeles, CA. Tina Mazuch, Rachel Berry and myself attended the House of Delegates Meeting held on Sunday, October 8th. The HOD walked through 5 different SBAR's that were presented for discussion. The five topics of discussion were Business Process Outsourcing, Consumer Engagement, HIM Reimagined, Professional Development and Leadership and Future of the House of Delegates. Over the next couple of months, I will dive into each of these further to help keep you aware of the issues and challenges surrounding these topics.

Our Annual Convention Committee continues to work hard in preparation taking into consideration feedback from last year and securing some wonderful speakers! Wishing you all a wonderful fall!

~ You can live your dreams if you can embrace change. It's by taking chances that you'll learn how to be brave ~

Your President, *Courtney Burbach*, RHA President, NHIMA 2017-2018

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1. What is your first and last name, current title/role, and credentials?

*Kelly Hajek, RHIA
Director Health Data and Information Management Program
Metropolitan Community College*

2. What has surprised you about being the HIM profession?

I have worked in healthcare my whole life, so I was pretty sure I knew what I was getting into. However, what surprised me the most was how much impact there was on the HIM department when, what seemed to be insignificant, changes were made in processes, procedures, etc.

3. What do you like best about being an HIM professional?

One of my main reasons for getting into this profession was the variety it afforded me when it came to an actual career path, and I have explored many of them.

4. What have you found to be the most challenging experiences you have had as an HIM professional so far?

To this day, I feel one of the greatest challenges of this profession is getting ourselves known and respected in the healthcare industry. Some organizations have realized the importance of our role, and others still view us, and refer to us, as medical librarians. We have evolved into so much more than that, and we need to make it know wherever we go!

5. If you could change one thing about the HIM profession, what would it be?

That we would be respected throughout the healthcare industry as much as other healthcare professionals are respected.

6. Has anyone influenced your decision to become an HIM professional or to change roles within the HIM profession? If so, who and what did they say or do to influence you?

When I was fresh out of my associate program, and had just earned my ART (yes, I'm dating myself now), I worked for this very forward thinking RN, Barb Goodrich, at Immanuel Fontenelle Home. She was a mover and a shaker, and she had me join her nursing leadership team. She had just been promoted in the organization, and was no longer my direct supervisor when she called me up one day to tell me about College of St. Mary offering the "60 Saturday's" Program. She gave me the number and told me I needed to call. I didn't question it one bit. I thought to myself, "If Barb is telling me I need to do this, then I need to do this. She is going places, and I want to go with her!" So I enrolled. Shortly afterward, AHIMA changed our credentials and offered the first proviso on the RHIA credential, and I took advantage. I didn't get to move with Barb, because as also shortly thereafter, my husband accepted a job as Principal in NW Iowa, and we moved up there for about 15 years, however, Barb remained my mentor until her death. Although she was an RN, she understood the importance of the HIM Credential, and she pushed me to always be better. She never made me feel less important than any of her nursing leadership team, and I will be forever grateful to her for that.

7. What is an element of being an HIM professional you wish more people understood?

The breadth of knowledge we have, and the value we add when given the opportunity.

8. What do you think will change about the HIM profession over the next five to ten years? Why?

The HIM profession has never stopped changing since I have been in it, so I don't see it stopping now. I think in the next five years, our focus will move toward a quality data driven focus, and I believe that has already happened to some degree. However, it will continue to evolve. I know some predict that coders are going to go away with the implementation of computer assisted coding. I don't see that happening. I see the role of the coder changing, but it won't go away. Although we have moved to an electronic health record, and it has improved our documentation greatly, there is still much more room for improvement, and it starts with HIM professionals being heard.

9. What would you tell someone who is thinking about becoming an HIM professional?

I tell them it is the greatest profession in healthcare! I tell them this profession will offer them opportunities beyond coding, and those opportunities are widespread throughout the healthcare continuum. I tell them, they need to be critical thinkers, flexible adapters, and able to stand firm in what is right. I tell them, if they can do that, they will be successful in this profession, and will love it as much as I have.

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Student Representative Needed for NHIMA Board of Directors

NHIMA is looking for a current HIM student that would be willing to be a student representative for the NHIMA board. Duties would include attending telephone monthly meetings, face-to-face meeting when required, and helping with the convention. Deadline is December 1st, 2017. If you are interested in filling this position, please download the below application and submit your application to Dawn Goodsell at dmgoodsell1@mccneb.edu

NHIMA Scholarship

Sarah Lane is the recipient of the NHIMA Scholarship. Sarah is the HIM Supervisor at Methodist Health System in Omaha. Sarah is both an active member of AHIMA and NHIMA. She is currently a HIM student at Clarkson College in Omaha NE. She was recognized by her references as working in the HIM field and applying her clinical knowledge to her current HIM courses. Sarah is always eager to assist other students in understanding HIM concepts. Sarah is described as being very organized, dedicated, steady, dependable and a conscientious student that always submits quality work. Congratulations Sarah!

Coding Roundtable Update

Suzanne Drake, RHIT, CCS, who has been writing appeal letters since 1995, reviewed some very important steps for a successful appeals management process at the recent AHIMA Clinical Coding Meeting in October. Identification of the agency letter access point(s) is an important first step. If the facility has a single access point for all letters “try to make it a position-specific process and not a person-specific process.” Designated staff should be trained on the distribution of the letters to ensure timely delivery of agency letters to appropriate staff. The second step is establishing a correspondence process and identification of who is responsible for the review and appeal process for the different types of denials. According to Drake, it is not enough to just read the reason for the denial. Identify the timeframe for the appeal, where the appeal should be directed, how it should be appealed and identification of all forms required to respond to the appeal. Ms Drake also said “All DRG change recommendations are not created equal. The facility needs to determine the core reason for the DRG change.” Most agency letters provide general change recommendation, such as insufficient documentation, incorrect procedure or clinical denials. When writing the appeal, use and cite official and reliable coding and reporting resources such as Coding Clinic, Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting, the CMS website and the US National Library of Medicine.
