MHIMA Uplink   **June 2011**

In This Issue:

Welcome to June 2011 Uplink

Welcome to the June 2011 issue of our MHIMA member and corporate partner e-newsletter, *Uplink.*

Remember, we are always looking for authors of articles of interest to our broad MHIMA membership: about 500 words, worth **two (2)** CE credits for your original work. Contact MHIMA

2011 Environmental Scan Survey

The 2011 Environmental Scan survey was released on June 7, 2011, to all MHIMA members. This is the annual survey requested by the AHIMA House of Delegates to assist the AHIMA Board of Directors and staff in setting future strategy. The results also assist the MHIMA Board in their annual strategy setting.

The survey is open through midnight on Sunday, June 19th, and you can earn one (1) CEU by responding. If you haven't responded to the survey yet, you can do so right now from this link.

Back to Top

Keep your AHIMA Profile Current

When is the last time you reviewed the information in your AHIMA profile? Have

This issue contains the scholarship essays from our eight MHIMA Student Merit 2011 Scholarship winners.

Current and past issues of our e-newsletter are always available under the UPLINK E-NEWSLETTERS button on our MHIMA website.

If you would like to unsubscribe to our newsletter, please contact Executive Director.

MHIMA Vision & Mission

Vision: The Minnesota Health Information Management Association, together with AHIMA, will set the standard and be the recognized leader in health information management practices, technology, education, research, and advocacy.

Mission: MHIMA is committed to the professional development of its members through education, networking, and life-long learning. These commitments promote high quality health information and benefit the public, health care providers, and other clinical data users.

Back to Top

President's Message
Sue Jensen, RHIT

As I sit at my table, today I am writing my last Uplink article as the President of MHIMA. During this tenure, I have visited many of you either at Regional meetings and, of course, at our Annual meeting held in April at Treasure Island in Red Wing. I am truly honored and humbled having been given this opportunity. I am not able to individually name everyone whom has assisted and inspired me, so to all MHIMA members, students and affiliates, I say, "Thank you."

Reflecting back, when I assumed this position last July, I had doubts regarding my own abilities and confidence leading this organization, but a truly wise woman told me that I would be fine. I told her, "I am not like you. I am an outside-of-the box thinker." Being from out-state, my priorities and goals were different from others (at least I thought). Her words to me were, "That is why you will do a wonderful

you changed positions? Have a new email address? Have you recently moved? These are just a few of the data elements in your AHIMA profile, and MHIMA uses this information on a regular basis.

The AHIMA member profile was recently updated and has a bit of a new look. Take a minute or two right now, visit the AHIMA Website, log in with your 7-digit AHIMA member number and your last name (capitalize the first letter!), and click on "My Profile/Dues Renewal." Review all of the sections and update the information as appropriate.

In the section for **Component State Association (CSA) Selections**, may we ask that you check "YES" to select E-mails about products and services and Postal Mailings. CSA stands for the state that you want to be associated with as an AHIMA member. MHIMA uses email and occasionally land mail as our primary means of communication, and if you check "NO" in the email or postal mail boxes, you won't receive either type of communication from us. Thank you!

Back to Top

Staying Up To Date with MN

Sue Jensen, RHIT   job."

e-Health

If you aren't receiving the weekly electronic MN e-Health Update newsletter, consider signing up for it. This will keep you up to date on issues related to e-Health, including HITECH, Meaningful Use, Privacy & Security and others, as well as provide links to e-Health resources available for your use. To subscribe, click [here](#).

[Back to Top](#)

Each President MHIMA elects brings different attributes and skills to the position. The diversity of each of us is what makes our organizations (AHIMA and MHIMA) great. While we all strive for the same outcomes in healthcare, whether it be electronic health record systems, release of information or just the same answer when it comes to coding a diagnostic condition or procedure, the journey is different for each of us. With wise wisdom and guidance from former MHIMA presidents and the encouragement and belief of the MHIMA Board, we had a productive, wonderful year.

Several of MHIMA's accomplishments this past year included:
- 443 attendees at our Annual meeting
- 9 webinars on multiple healthcare topics
- 3 awards from AHIMA

In addition, several MHIMA members received recognition from AHIMA with Danika Brinda receiving the "Rising Star" award (remember, that is two members in two years as Megan O'Neill received this award last year), Diane Larson was elected to the AHIMA Nominating Committee, and Jeanne Solberg was elected as a Director to the AHIMA Board of Directors. This past week, MHIMA also submitted two applications to AHIMA in two Triumph Award categories for 2011, so keep your fingers crossed.

In the upcoming years, healthcare facilities are mandated to update their software systems, learn a new coding methodology and on May 31st, we learned that changes are potentially coming regarding the tracking of disclosures, just to name a few. Health Information professionals are the individuals who should be at the forefront, leading our facilities to assure compliance with these upcoming changes.

June continues to be a busy month. The following events are scheduled for MHIMA:
- June 17 & 18 - Minnesota eHealth Summit (poster presentation)
- June 24th - MHIMA transitional Board meeting at Allina

MHIMA Job Bank

Are you seeking a job? Are you an employer looking for a potential employee? Is your facility looking for someone with a skill set of MHIMA members? Be sure to check out the MHIMA Job Bank Network on our website, which continues to be very popular and new positions are being posted on a regular basis. Here, you'll find information about registering as a "Job Seeker" or as an "Employer". New positions are posted frequently, so check us out often!

Job Seekers: There is no

● June 27 & 28 – Minnesota Rural Health Conference in Duluth (exhibitor booth)

Multiple times people have asked me, "Are you glad to be done?" regarding my Presidency term. I have to say honestly, I am not. I told them, "I just figured out what I was doing and have become confident with my leadership abilities." The appreciation of the role of Past President truly came to light for me, as the guidance and friendship of Steph Luthi-Terry, Diane Larson, Lisa Kampa, and especially Myrna Wells-Ulland who have inspired and guided me. My goal for the next year is to continue in a similar role for our next President.

Congratulations to our incoming President, Gina Sanvik, as I pass the torch to her.

Respectfully yours,
Sue

Back to Top

HIPAA Accountings of Disclosure
Steph Luthi-Terry, eHIM KFA Coordinator MHIMA Past President

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) released its long-awaited proposed regulations for modifications to HIPAA accountings of disclosure, called for in the 2009 ARRA-HITECH legislation.

HITECH expanded an individual's right to an accounting of disclosures of his or her protected health information (PHI) to include disclosures for treatment, payment, and operations, if the disclosures are made through an electronic health record.

Steph Luthi-Terry, MA, RHIA

OCR's rule also proposes to expand the accounting provision through a complementary requirement to "provide individuals with the right to receive an access report indicating who has access to electronic protected health information in a designated record set." OCR "believe[s] that these changes to the accounting requirements will provide information of value to individuals while placing a reasonable burden on covered entities and business associates."

Individuals would have a right to a report beginning January 1, 2013, from entities that have acquired electronic health record systems after January 1, 2009, and beginning January 1, 2014, from entities that acquired systems before January 1, 2009.

AHIMA is forming a response team and will make comments available for member information before the end of the response period. As a member of the EHR Practice Council, I will be participating in the AHIMA volunteer group once the proposed rule is made available. There is a 60-day window in which we will be able to submit comments.

fee to register.

Employers: Job posting fees are very reasonable and reach all of our MHIMA membership. E-blasts of job announcements are also available for purchase.

Click Here to visit the MHIMA Job Bank.

Back to Top

MHIMA Coding & Data Quality Roundtable Tool Kits

The MHIMA Coding & Data Quality Committee's newest PowerPoint presentation, including case study questions, is **"Neoplasms - Carcinoid Tumor"** There is an accompanying case study answer presentation. This is one of several "tool kits" developed for use by MHIMA members to support coding education and discussion in your facilities and at your regional meetings.

Is there a tool kit topic that needs to be developed? Let your needs be known. Contact Angela Jackson.

The general "Do It Yourself" PowerPoint tool kit gives you the guidelines to set up a coding roundtable.

Additional tool kits on

If you have specific concerns related to the proposed rule, I would like to hear from you. I suspect there will be common themes that our members will identify. This information can then be utilized to provide comment and input with the volunteer group I will be participating in.

Please feel free to forward your comments to Myrna Wells-Ulland, Executive Director of MHIMA. Myrna will collate responses and forward them on to me.

Back to Top

MHIMA Board Transition

Your 2011-2012 incoming officers and board members were welcomed at our annual business meeting on April 28, 2011 and will officially take office on July 1, 2011:

- **President-Elect:** Ranelle Bauer, RHIT
- **Secretary:** Katie Miller, MA, RHIA
- **Treasurer:** Kristi Lundgren, RHIA
- **Delegate Director:** Jean MacDonell, RHIA

They will join Gina Sanvik as President, Sue Jensen as Past-President, Danika Brinda and Janelle Wapola as 2nd year Delegate Directors.

MHIMA extends a final official thank you to Steph Luthi-Terry, Past-President, Cindy Glewwe, 2nd year Delegate Director, and Penni Drews, Secretary, whose terms conclude on June 30, 2011. On behalf of everyone in MHIMA, we are so appreciative of your leadership and commitment to the vision and mission of MHIMA and to our HIM profession.

Back to Top

Health IT Competency Exams Are Now Available

News from the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology: Health IT Professionals (HIT Pro) exams opened to individuals on May 20, 2011. These exams assess basic competency of individuals who are seeking to demonstrate proficiency in certain health IT workforce roles integral to the implementation and management of EHR. There are six exams, aligned with the roles and training provided by the Community College Consortia associated with the Health IT Workforce Development Program grant funding.

These competency exams are not a credential or a certification, but enable health IT professionals, employers, and other stakeholders to assess their own health IT competency levels or the competency of their health IT staff members, as appropriate. The exams may also be used by employers to identify training gaps and personnel needs integral to achieving meaningful use of EHR. As the healthcare industry transitions to EHRs, HIT Pros show a commitment to their profession and their career. It can be said that the future of health IT starts with the HIT Pro competency exam.

specific topics that have been developed and are available include Interventional Radiology, E&M, Heart Failure, updated Present on Admission (POA) and Aftercare vs Follow Up.

All are available on the Coding and Data Quality button on the MHIMA website. Watch for additional toolkits as they are developed!

And a reminder about your general coding questions: You are encouraged to use AHIMA's Coding CoPs for coding related questions. There is a general coding CoP community for coders as well as several for specific coding areas. These CoPs are a great resource for submitting coding questions and participating in the discussion threads surrounding the questions of others. To participate in these CoPs, Click Here.

Back to Top

MHIMA Promotional Items

Check out our MHIMA Store on our website. You'll find tailored logo button-downs, cozy crews and hoodies, and a stunning sterling silver key ring, embossed with our logo, for sale. These items would make a great gift for yourself, a

Each exam consists of 125 multiple-choice questions to be completed in three hours. Pearson Vue will conduct the exams at one of its 230 nationwide test centers. Individuals who took the first exam in May will receive their results in the mail in four to six weeks. Starting in September, the exams will provide live scoring.

Vouchers for the exams are free to students trained through the Community College Consortia program (HIT Work Force Grant Training) and for other individuals with relevant experience, training, or education in health care or IT. Vouchers will soon be available through Pearson Vue's Voucher Store and may be ordered by members of the Commmunity College Consortia, other accredited academic institutions, state and local employment agencies, and health care providers. These institutions may distribute vouchers to individuals who meet the criteria. The vouchers expire four months after being ordered.

The cost of the first exam for individuals without a voucher is $299. The cost to re-take an exam or take an additional exam for another role is $199. Individuals must make reservations to take the exams with Pearson Vue either by phone (888-944-8776) or online. You have up to 48 hours to cancel or reschedule your reservation before the exam appointment.

Exams are available for the following roles:
- Clinician/Practitioner Consultant
- Implementation Manager
- Implementation Support Specialist
- Practice Workflow & Information Management Redesign Specialist
- Technical/Software Support Staff
- Trainer

For complete information about all aspects of the exams, click here

Back to Top

MHIMA's Lunch & Learn Webinars

MHIMA's Lunch & Learn Webinars have concluded for the summer. All webinars from this past year have been recorded and a DVD is available for purchase if you could not attend the live event. Visit the MHIMA website and click on the HIM Education button/Online Learning for complete details on the "live" events as well as ordering recorded webinars.

Archived versions are now available for $49 for members, or a package of three for $129.

The MHIMA webinar series is an opportunity to pick up needed information as well as earn CEUs at a very reasonable rate, and our presentations reach our members all across the state. We hope you take advantage of our archived webcasts!

colleague, or to honor someone's achievement.

You can find these items at our MHIMA booth at the upcoming Annual Meeting also!

Back to Top

Professional Practice Experience (PPE) Opportunity

Finding a site for a student's internship is critical to their future success, and by extension, to our overall success as a HIM profession. Every year, HIM students begin the search for a field-based professional practice experience (PPE).

AHIMA has issued a "call to action" for PPE site manager opportunities. This is a great way to add to your annual continuing education unit (CEU) requirement while fulfilling a fundamental obligation of our profession. AHIMA-credentialed professionals who mentor a student are eligible for one CEU for every 60 minutes of direct contact with a maximum of five CEUs (five hours of contact) per student, and a maximum of 10 CEUs is allowed in each recertification cycle.

In today's environment, change is coming at a fast pace. This generation will soon become an extraordinary asset in advancing our HIM profession. This is your time to make the choice and be the difference in helping mold our future HIM leaders.

Sign up to be a PPE site manager by clicking here. Your contact information will be shared with only CAHIIM-accredited HIM programs.

Thank you!

MHIMA 2011 Legal Resource Manual is Here!

Great News! The 2011 Legal Resource Manual is available for order and we have new pricing!
- $150 MHIMA/AHIMA members (tax-exempt organizations)
- $200 non-members (tax-exempt)
- $90 student members of AHIMA with MN as their designated state and enrolled in a tax exempt educational program

Individuals ordering from organizations who are not MN sales-tax exempt will be charged MN sales tax in addition to the prices listed above.

Updates from the last 2009 version include consents, affiliate record sharing, ID fraud/theft, breach of information, ROI updates, and issues related to the use, regulation, correction, etc. of the EHR. It includes the laws and rules that address the majority of issues that may arise with respect to health information practice. As one member states, "This is truly a valuable resource for anyone that works with health care." It's a compilation of best practices and experience of HIM professionals and the

facilities they represent in Minnesota, and again it's had legal review. All HIM Departments should have this Manual in their office for ready reference.

Our thanks and appreciation to the 2011 Legal Resource Manual team led by Heidi Onsted and Chris Bushaw for their extensive work in making this updated resource available for you.

MHIMA also thanks IOD, Incorporated, one of our corporate partners, for reproducing our 2011 Manual CD.

For more information and to order, click here.

Back to Top

MN HIT Professional Training Program

Normandale Community College is currently recruiting students for the Health IT Professional Training Program, a 6-month ARRA-HITECH funded HIT program focused on job-specific training for one of four workforce roles in the field of HIT. This training incorporates "hard" technical skills as well as "soft" skills such as problem solving, decision making, time management, etc. The program is offered as an online, distance learning program with intermittent face-to-face meetings.

If you have a background and/or education in any of these areas, you would be a good candidate for this program:
• IT professions
• Health professions
• Health Information
• Technology professionals
• Other related fields such as public health, software vendors, IT or HC consulting firms

The next cohort for training begins October 2011. Applications will be accepted starting the end of June, 2011. For more information from Normandale Community College,click here. You'll find a link to the MnHIT Short Term Training Program and an online form application.

Back to Top

Scholarship Essay - Janet Fuller Herzing University
$500 Scholarship - Coding Category
"How I Will Use This Degree to Advance the HIM Profession"

A brief look at my professional experience best explains how I will use a degree in HIM to advance the profession. My journey to the position I hold today as presentation producer for corporate executives has been a career development experience taking me through the advancements of technology every step of the way. My ambitions and goals have always been the same, to organize

the information and deliver it in the most efficient and cost-effective way. It has involved surviving many technological hurdles, being deadline and data driven all of the way.

My background in designing and producing presentations for high-level corporate executives and running their meetings in front of large audiences requires a love for detail, accuracy, diligence, professionalism, patience, and steady nerves. Being thrust into projects demands learning new things rapidly; be it a client's new product or a new advancement in software or hardware to deliver information. I love learning and I have been very successful in the meetings and events industry, because I learn fast and I am continuously staying abreast with new developments. Alas, it is a niche market and the call for this specialty service has drastically declined over the past few years.

My decision to return to school was not an easy one. I researched nearly two years before I arrived at Health Information Management. After Coding, Anatomy and Physiology is my favorite course. Early in my career, I was a technical illustrator and painted animation cells for slide production. I did a lot of anatomical drawings of ears, eyes and hearts for doctors to give presentations. Every little detail was drawn by hand. Because of this, I have a secret passion for Frank Netter and his anatomical works.

I also have a knack for terminology. I studied foreign languages in high school and I feel I have an intimate relationship with words, dissecting them to understand them, and my career has trained my eye to catch typographical errors. Admittedly, I could not carry out an intelligent conversation with medical terminology, but I can read the language with accuracy and understanding.

As do many others who pursue this field, I have had numerous family members who have fought battles for their health that I have been very close to. I lost a sister, sister-in-law, and a nephew to cancer, another sister to a pulmonary embolism, and recently helped my brother through his CABG. I provided care-giving first to my mother who had liver cancer, then to my father with dementia. Learning about Medicare and HIPAA from a consumer stand point sparked an interest in me to learn more from the administrative side. Something about healthcare just clicks for me.

I chose coding not only because I have a strong sense of detail and extensive knowledge of computer applications, I believe the field will give me opportunities to obtain a secure and rewarding career. I have many skills and a vast knowledge that I can apply towards a new career in the healthcare sector. I many not be suitable for physically helping patients one on one; I do think I can be of value to the field from an administrative standpoint.

I have found that most of my learning experience has come down to what I have known and exercised for years. It is not always how much you know, it's knowing where to look to find the correct answers.

MBIC is my focus now, but I may want to carry it further. My first goal is to obtain a diploma; I have further ambitions to extend my academic career into Healthcare Information Management. I would like to work in the environment before I set higher goals. I bring to the table maturity and discretion that only time can build.

A scholarship will enable me to continue my pursuits as a college student, and widens my ability to

financially make my goals a reality. I appreciate your time in reviewing my scholarship application. This scholarship will be of immense help to my career development.

Back to Top

Scholarship Essay - Shellie Mekash Rochester Community & Technical College
$500 Winner - RHIT Category

"How I Will Use This Degree to Advance the HIM Profession"

I will use the Health Information Technology degree for the advancement of this profession in our area of the state, and more specifically, in my place of employment. I am so excited and proud to be achieving this goal and by accomplishing such, being on an even playing field with my peers in regards to HIM. Serving on a committee at the regional level or volunteering on the state level is on my next set of goals. Along with that, continuing to network and bring in best practices to my organization.

Obtaining this degree opens up so many doors on a personal and professional level for me. On a personal level, visiting with those high school students on just what an incredible opportunity there is out there for HIM professionals with the demand for the electronic record and interoperability. Explaining to them just what it means in terms of jobs and a future that could be theirs. It is a field that is not widely sold, at least not regionally, and up until recently there wasn't a lot of hype about the need for these professionals, at least not in the average public's eye. Being a non-traditional student, I will also plug (and have) the profession to those that are looking for a career change with many, many opportunities out there.

On a professional level, I have a high desire to interact with other HIM professionals to learn from each other, glean processes, work flows and philosophies from them to establish best practices for my workplace. Sharing at regional meetings and interacting at the state level is so very valuable for all in attendance. I gain a lot of information by attending and come back with a renewed enthusiasm for HIM. At some point, when my experience and knowledge warrant, I would love to be involved in a state meeting. This opportunity could come as a member of one of the committees or as a presenter on a specific topic. I know committee membership can be a challenge geographically, but with technology we've come a long way in gaining participation without all of the travel involved. Once I have completed my goal of obtaining the credentials RHIT, I will have more available time to pursue being active on a regional or state level.

As far as planting seeds for this profession, I am proud to report that my daughter is currently in Northland College's HIT program and her friend is taking coding classes to obtain her certificate from there as well. If you ask them, I have had an influence in showing them just what a wonderful, rewarding career Health Information Management can be.

Back to Top

Scholarship Essay - Deborah Olson Anoka Technical College

$500 Scholarship - RHIT Category

"How I Will Use This Degree to Advance the HIM Profession"

Have you ever been asked a question like, "How old would you be if you didn't know how old you were?" This was a common question my dad would ask me. He lived as though he never knew his age and he reminded me that life is certainly a precious gift on wheels. In other words, never stop moving and learning. Absorb all that you can and obtain education that will allow you to be purposeful to others first and then to yourself. For this reason, I decided I wanted to go back to school to obtain my Associate of Applied Science degree at Anoka Technical College in the Health Information Technology program. I plan to incorporate 30 years of experience in the health insurance industry with the new skills I am learning to obtain a rewarding professional position as a RHIT.

With many changes occuring in the industry, the introduction of the electronic health record, protected health information, HIPAA, and the implementation of ICD-10, I felt it was time to learn how my skills could serve a better purpose to others and bring me a feeling of accomplishment. I have worked with CPT and ICD-9-CM coding for 30 years and was out in the industry when the first DRG claims came through our claim system. I have had the chance to see how everything has evolved since 1980, and I am glad that I can use some of my knowledge to help carve the way into the future.

I have held many positions including claim examiner, auditor, claim consultant, trainer, and time management coach. With each of these titles, there came along bits and pieces to build upon from my prior position. I have been pleasantly surprised at my realization of how I fit into the future of this HIM profession. The skills I have refined over the years in the insurance industry will play an important part in my new career. I will be able to contribute my knowledge and experience as I continue my learning and move forward in this adventure. I am self motivated and enjoy playing an active role in a team environment. I look forward to an auditing position utilizing my skills and knowledge.

As a result of a large layoff in the health care industry from the difficult economic times in our nation, a new door has opened for me and the opportunity to return to school became a possibility. While this has been a great sacrifice for my family, we have worked together to develop and re-evaluate our budget and household responsibilities. At times the challenge seemed difficult and perseverance kept each of us moving ahead. I am well on my way towards achieving my goal to graduate in December of 2011. Interestingly is that my daughter will be graduating from high school in June of 2012, and she is so proud of her mom in college.

I look forward to my new profession and I am grateful that I can be a contributor with information to help as we all go through the incredible changes that are anticipated in the Health Information Technology field over the next few years. I look forward to the exciting and challenging times ahead

of me. This adventure has provided me the time to just stop and look at my life in general, where I am going and most importantly, how I can contribute to and fit into the new era of health information technology.

Back to Top

Scholarship Essay - Rhonywn Grams Rasmussen College Eden Prairie

$500 Scholarship - RHIT Category

"How I Will Use This Degree to Advance the HIM Profession"

Health information management (HIM) is evolving and the processes that were once used are becoming obsolete in the modern medical world. Historically, the medical records department was a paper machine, now we are on the way to becoming a paperless industry where there are new challenges to overcome in an electronic world.

I currently work as a HIM Clerk and I have had the opportunity to bring new ideas to the department for better processes such as filing with patient's medical record number, and help facilitate more efficient process for compliance issues. These new ideas have had positive and enthusiastic responses from the managers as well as the assistant director of the department. The managers have been very open to receiving new ideas from a HIM Clerk who has a fresh perspective as well as the knowledge to improve the department's processes. I can only assume that as I become more knowledgeable that I will not only be able to bring even more efficient processes to life but to also teach others what I have learned.

With 10 plus years of on-the-job experience I have a solid understanding of the different aspects of HIM, and combining that with my education I feel it can only benefit myself and others that I work with now and those I will in the future. Sharing this information can help the medical records industry in many ways. It will benefit the employers, insurance companies, and the government, and it also will help the public feel safer knowing that their personal and confidential information is being handled with care. By learning and understanding new methods of record handling, I feel that I can perform my job duties to the fullest expectations of everyone involved with as few mistakes as possible.

Upholding a high standard for both my education and my career reflects on how I want others to see Health Information Management. The HIM profession exhibits a level of professionalism and integrity as we conduct business as well as how we support new methods of learning. I will take these values with me through my career as a student, and as a valuable asset to the HIM profession.

Back to Top

Scholarship Essay - Janet Humphrey Saint Paul College

$750 Scholarship - RHIT Category

"How I Will Use This Degree to Advance the HIM Profession"

After over 20 years as a registered nurse in a hospital setting, I began preparation for another career. I appreciated much about the nursing profession but was becoming stressed and physically drained in that setting. I had casually considered potential options, but after experiencing stress fractures in both legs despite my physical fitness, I knew it was time to consider "re-tooling" more seriously even though I made a full recovery.

During my convalescence, I was beset by a managed care organizations' attempt to manage me out of my sick leave despite my physician's advocacy and my best eforts. Those who were finally able to intervene so that this was resolved in my favor were the medical records staff who worked in the orthopedic surgeon's offices. I wondered if I might be able to do the same for others in the future, and began to think about the possibilities for service to the many people who would transition into Medicare in the coming years and also for those who might be able to consider the possibilities of insurance if health insurance reform became a reality.

In the course of my years in nursing, I had also become interested in heart care and cancer registries, infectious disease prevention, public health and education in disease management. Meeting with the director of Saint Paul College's HIT program began a process of learning of many possibilities for using my medical experience in new ways in health care.

If I am to advance the HIM profession, my first objective is to make full use of every educational opportunity in my program to prepare myself to be the best health information professional I can possibly be. The program is challenging and worthwhile. My goals include my associate degree, coding and RHIT certifications and continuing education.

I have attended the Region G fall conference. I network with an MHIMA board member, and I have found these professionals and those teaching in Saint Paul College's program to be generous, friendly and committed. I am not precisly sure what part of the professional organization I will involve myself with, though I will certainly attend some of the state and regional meetings. My involvement in social justice advocacy over the years may draw me in the direction of legislative and other advocacy. I look forward to joining health information professionals in using our collective wisdom and experience to advocate for health care systems to serve our people and the best information systems to serve the health care needs of our country.

When I read AHIMA's various codes of ethics, words that stand out for me are "protect" and "service." The values of respect for privacy and confidentiality are values worth protecting and serving. The values and history of this profession are worth protecting. This is the kind of work I wish to do: to protect and to serve. I do not just hope to do a job. I hope to become a better person and a better advocate by serving a good profession.

I have been constantly encouraged and supported by people in the HIM profession. At a stage in life when many of my peers have become stale and tired of working, I am now looking forward to wonderful possibilties for many years of service. Since there no longer is a cavalry, I've committed

myself to preparing as well as I am able for a career in the field of health information and I think it may be just as exciting.

Scholarship Essay - Krista Kalthoff The College of St. Scholastica
$1000 Scholarship - RHIA Category

"How I Will Use This Degree to Advance the HIM Profession"

The most significant way that I could use my degree to advance the Health Information Management (HIM) Profession would be by promoting awareness and deepening understanding about the role that HIM professionals fill in today's various healthcare settings. Recently as an intern at Essentia Health in Duluth, Minnesota, I provided end user support for physicians and nurses during and after go-live of their Encompass electronic health record (EHR). As I talked with them, and answered questions pertaining to my background, many people had never heard of HIM. Most physicians and nurses only had blank stares after I stated that my major was HIM, exemplifying HIM's unfamiliarity. I tried to correlate my major with functions that healthcare providers categorize with the Health Information Services (HIS) department at Essentia. Overall, those providing direct patient care had a misunderstanding of HIS and its role.

As healthcare implements ICD-10, there will be a definite opportunity for HIM professionals to step into the education role specifically. Those in HIM, including myself, should use this occasion to present education information through classes and/or meetings on how different users are affected by ICD-10 changes. By going through the workflow including HIS's role in ICD-10, thoseo providing direct patient care will have a better grasp on how HIS is tied in with them. HIS can help to smooth out the fears associated with the change. Others in turn would clearly see HIM professionals in a brighter light recognizing HIS's impact in a time of stress.

Another way that I could advance both the HIM profession and the medical facility would be to use the degree's skill set to make the medical facility more efficient. HIM's ability to manage the coding workflow directly leads to accurate coding; therefore, the statistics derived from coding are more reliable. This information is vital in today's economy, because having this knowledge will better allocate resources based on the needs of the patient population. Increasing customer service to patients will positively impact patients and also the medical facility. HIM professionals leading this quality improvement initiative will represent an aspect of why HIM professionals are valuable and the role they play.

It is important for physicians and nurses to know more than just where HIS is located in a medical facility, but why they are there and how this differs from the stigma of just being policemen. Understanding the true role of HIM professionals will foster a better relationship with those providing direct patient care and others. Leading educational workshops, increasing efficiency and looking for ways to increase customer service to both patients and internal employees will make HIM an integral part of healthcare and this, in and of itself, raises awareness and appreciation of HIM's capacity.

Scholarship Essay - Roxanne Timmerman The College of St. Scholastica

$750 Scholarship - Master's Category

"How I Will Use This Degree to Advance the HIM Profession"

I have been a full time student in the Health Information Management, Master of Science program at The College of St. Scholastica for almost two full years now. I am already applying the knowledge I have gained from classes such as medical vocabularies and classifications, data governance, and decision support in my day to day responsibilities. I am able to understand and contribute to issue resolution and at times educate others along the way.

The HIM Master of Science degree will allow me to advance our profession by increasing the visibility and importance of having an HIM professional as an integral part of the team leading the management of electronic health information. Electronic health records (EHRs) are being implemented at an accelerated rate around the country due to government incentives. Facilities are working fervently in their attempt to meet implementation timelines. Detailed workflow analysis of current processes needs to be completed prior to EHR implementation. These processes then need to be adapted to the electronic environment. The analytical and detailed thinking of the health information professional is critical at this point in the implementation process. There are many areas in the day to day movement of patient information we have knowledge of that others on the team may not consider. We know what steps are involved from the point of the physician dictating a visit until it becomes an authenticated, legal document. One simple example involves documentation having incomplete areas or blanks in the note due to the transcriptionist being unable to understand what was dictated. Processes need to be developed and agreed upon related to the upload of "incomplete" information to the EHR, and how the physician will be alerted to this fact prior to signing the document. Some may jump to the conclusion the document should not be sent to the EHR prior to missing information being included, unmindful of the fact that now the information is unavailable for patient care since the hardcopy is no longer available to the provider. We need to act as the liaison between the end user and the technical support in suggesting ways to modify processes and fill the gaps as we move from the paper world to patient information being completely electronic.

The electronic health record is presenting all of us the opportunity to advance our profession as long as we are willing to step up to the opportunities that present themselves or create opportunities for ourselves. We have a knowledge base that encompasses all areas of healthcare including analysis of electronic information, ensuring the integrity of that information, process analysis and health information exchange, just to name a few. I am willing to accept those challenges as well as call upon my peers to join me in the many new roles we are capable of filling and will be asked to fill as health care facilities understand the depth of our knowledge and potential contributions to managing electronic health information.

Scholarship Essay - Laura Blabac The College of St. Scholastica

$1500 Scholarship - Master's Category

"How I Will Use This Degree to Advance the HIM Profession"

The Master's degree I am soon to complete is a dual Master's degree in Health Information Management and IT Leadership, which leaves quite the range to consider as I contemplate the direction my degree and work will take me. An esteemed colleague once suggested that one way to decide upon a career path among the myriad available within the health information management profession was to ask, "What do you want your legacy to be?" Still a daunting question yet filled with exciting possibilities, it is within this framework that I consider the answer on how I will use the degree to advance the HIM profession.

As health information technology and computing power continue to develop, one of my goals is to work to establish an environment that positions the HIM profession in a leadership role within the healthcare IT. The dynamic environment of healthcare today requires knowledge of health information and health information management that traditionally-trained information technologists are not prepared for. It requires as well a level of commitment and dedication to data quality improvement and redesign of information management practices, in order to optimize the information available to physicians, their patients and the overall public. Most of all, however, it requires a "seat at the table" as the decisions are made that affect how health information and health informatics can be used, both organizationally and nationally.

A secondary goal is related to the idea of patient empowerment: I want to advance patient/consumer education about healthcare information management through development of personal health records, effectively investing in their own health through knowledge gained from increased and efficient information access. For the shift toward patient-centered care to more fully occur, a patient must be an equal player on the care team they are involved with, which can only be removed by "lifting the veil of mystery" about what is in their health records, and providing them with the information that is needed at the time it is needed for personal decision-making.

A firm believer in Winston Churchill's maxim, "We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give," another way I will be using this degree to advance the HIM profession will be through involvement and volunteerism in the health information management association at various levels. Part of my future intent is to present ideas and inspire ideals through presentation to HIM professionals, and to recruit for and teach future generations of HIM professionals, to encourage futuristic thinking about how technology can support the efficiency and cost-effectiveness that the healthcare industry needs, while advancing what it can do to shape health information that can be used to improve clinical care and outcomes.

It's a hefty list (and does not begin to cover my aspirations to publication). How does all this relate to how I will advance the HIM profession? In summary, I hope to use my degree to advance the

knowledge and practice of health information management. I nope to be an exemplary professional who strives for, encourages and even demands excellence in health information data collection, in health information management and in healthcare IT leadership. I hope to create awareness of the HIM profession through the volunteer activities I dedicate my time to and ultimately, I hope to advance the HIM profession by helping to facilitate the evolution of medicine through excellent stewardship of its main data source: health information.

Back to Top

PRINTABLE FORMAT