

June 23, 2011

Dear CSA Presidents, President-elects and Central Office Executives,

You may find yourself responding, just as we have, to members' concerns about what AHIMA is doing to create job opportunities for credentialed but unemployed or underemployed HIM professionals. As you know, numerous labor estimates identify health information technology (HIT) as one of the top 10 fastest-growing professions over the next decade, expected to create as many as 10,000 new jobs per year. Those estimates, when considered in the context of healthcare reform, transitioning to ICD-10, implementation of electronic health records (EHRs) and various aspects of the HITECH Act, portend well for a period of sustained, unparalleled growth in our profession in the immediate future. But, what about members who are struggling with employment issues today? It may help to be aware of the many career resources AHIMA has in place now, and the workforce development programs being put in place to meet demand tomorrow.

AHIMA offers a variety of resources and programs to serve the career advancement needs of our members, including:

Health Information Careers Web site

The Health Information Careers website, <http://hicareers.com> provides those pursuing health information management (HIM) careers with valuable information on:

- Where to look for jobs
- Advice on landing your first job
- Career pathways
- Educational programs
- Career assistance job board

Career Planning Benefits You Can Access With Your AHIMA Membership

- AHIMA members have access to general career coaching through our Career Assist vendor, Job Target, at http://careerassist.ahima.org/c/coaching/index.cfm?site_id=681
- The AHIMA Communities of Practice: Many conversations about career moves and job searches happen in our [Communities of Practice](#). Try posting a question in a related community, such as "Students" or "Recent Graduates" including "Exam Prep" and "Job Hunting."
- AHIMA's ACE members: Access the [ACE Directory](#) to contact an ACE member interested in serving as a mentor. New AHIMA members and students are encouraged to access new member orientation, taking their first step in connecting with a mentor.
- Component State Associations: Contact the [component state association](#) to find ways to connect with HIM professionals or students in your area.
- If you're looking for your first job, be sure to visit our [Landing That First Job](#) page on Hicareers.com for additional insight, and a blog post about finding your first job.

AHIMA Student Resources

- Career Prep Toolkit: This interactive career planning guide, currently being beta tested, is designed to empower students in their job search. Through the toolkit, each student can produce a tangible work plan, useful in giving meaning to his or her job search. We encourage mentors to use this toolkit as a starting point with their mentees.
- Improved Mentor Program (guidelines attached): We have rewritten and formalized our guidelines for the AHIMA student mentor and mentors can receive between 1 and 3 CEUs for the time they spend counseling mentees.

- Student Advisory Council: We have a very ambitious group of students on the council this year. The council recently held a kick-off meeting and is at work on some of their charges. Developments include the Student Academy agenda for the AHIMA Convention & Exhibit and regional student groups that permit student members to have more local volunteer opportunities for networking.
- Networking and Mentor Connections at Student Academy: At this year's Student Academy we'll feature "lightning round" meetings with mentors, a presentation by the Student Advisory Council, and a presentation about the nontraditional career paths in HIM.
- The new [Student Connection eNewsletter](#): Future issues of Student Connection will include new topics, such as interviews with recent graduates, career planning tips, and updates from the student advisory council members. This newsletter will echo the sense of empowerment we're trying to instill in our student members.

Additional Programs and Resources

We're partnering with the Center for Adult Education and Learning (CAEL). CAEL is a national organization allied with the Princeton Review, focused on helping new and displaced workers find not just jobs, but careers. In cooperation with CAEL, we are starting an:

- HIM career counseling center
- HIM educational recruitment and pipeline initiative for colleges and Universities
- Offer an initial 25 stipends for in-depth career development and up to nine college credits at more than 1,000 participating Universities

We are also working with the Delta Regional Institute at the University of Mississippi to provide six month educational programs for AHIMA members in the areas of EHR implementation, meaningful use, privacy and security, and CDI. The first graduates will receive stipends to sit for the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) certification exams, and all students will be eligible to sit for the ONC exams.

AHIMA collaborated with the ONC to develop the RECENTLY ANNOUNCED HIT Pro competency exams. See the attached AHIMA press release. We are continuing to develop resources to create jobs and to help fill the estimated 50,000 new positions required to implement the US health system's transition to EHRs. Please let us know if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Bill Rudman, PhD, RHIA
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Vice President of Education and Workforce Development
AHIMA