

# Health Information Management

## Includes:

- Health information administrator
- Health information technician

## Definition of the Profession

The health information management profession includes managers, technicians, and specialists expert in systems and processes for health information management, including:

- **Planning:** Formulating strategic, functional, and user requirements for health information
- **Engineering:** Designing information flow, data models, and definitions
- **Administration:** Managing data collection and storage, information retrieval, and release
- **Application:** Analyzing, interpreting, classifying, and coding data and facilitating information use by others
- **Policy:** Establishing and implementing security, confidentiality, retention, integrity, and access standards

## Health Information Administrator

Graduates of baccalaureate degree educational programs in health information management are known as health information administrators and apply their training and expertise in both science and management to develop, implement, and/or provide oversight to health care data collection and reporting systems to assure the integrity and availability of the information resources needed to support authorized users and decision-makers. Health information managers have expertise in developing and managing effective processes and systems to assure the integrity of health care data and to preserve the complete, accurate, and legal source of patient data (patient medical records), as well as expertise in developing and managing effective processes and systems to preserve patient privacy, confidentiality, and the security of health information maintained in paper or computerized systems. Common job titles held by health information administrators in today's job market are related to line, staff, and/or technical positions such as director, assistant director, manager, privacy officer, compliance officer, claims analyst, clinical information specialist, HIM educator, etc. It is anticipated that job titles will change (eg, health information engineer, clinical information coordinator, data administrator, information security officer) as health care enterprises expand their reliance on information systems and technology. Health information administrators have, and will continue to assume, roles that directly contribute to the development of computer-based patient record systems and a national health information infrastructure.



### Career Description

The tasks or functions performed by health information administrators are numerous and are continually changing within the work environment. Although the job title and work setting will dictate the actual tasks performed by the health information administrator, in general this individual performs tasks related to the management of health information and the systems used to collect, store, process, retrieve, analyze,

disseminate, and communicate that information, regardless of the physical medium in which information is maintained. In addition, health information administrators assess the uses of information and identify what information is available and where there are inconsistencies, gaps, and duplications in health data sources. They are capable of planning and designing systems and serving as pivotal team members in the development of computer-based patient record systems and other enterprise-wide information systems. Their responsibilities also include serving as brokers of information services. Among the information services provided are a design and requirements definition for clinical and administrative systems development, data administration, data quality management, data security management, decision support design and data analyses, and management of information-intensive areas such as clinical quality/performance assessment and utilization and case management.



### Employment Characteristics

Presently, opportunities for practice are found in numerous settings such as acute care general hospitals, managed care organizations, consulting firms, claims and reimbursement organizations, accounting firms, home health care agencies, long-term care facilities, corrections facilities, drug companies, behavioral health care organizations, insurance companies, state and federal health care agencies, and public health care computing industries. Practice opportunities are unlimited.



### Salary

According to the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), entry-level salaries average between \$40,000 and \$75,000. Refer to Section IV, Table 5 of this *Directory* for more information, or see [www.ama-assn.org/go/hpsalary](http://www.ama-assn.org/go/hpsalary).



### Educational Programs

**Length.** Baccalaureate degree programs are 4 years. Postbaccalaureate and other certificate programs are generally 1 year.

**Prerequisites.** Applicants for the 4-year baccalaureate degree program should have a high school diploma or equivalent. Applicants for the 1-year post-baccalaureate certificate program should have a baccalaureate degree that includes coursework in science and statistics, as specified.

**Curriculum.** The preprofessional curriculum should include appropriate general education credit predicated on the requirements of the academic institution. The professional curriculum requires:

- Biomedical sciences (anatomy, physiology, language of medicine, pharmacology, and disease processes)
- Information technology (microcomputer applications, programming, system architectures and operating systems, introduction to database concepts, and data communications)
- Health care delivery systems
- Legal aspects of health care and ethical issues
- Organization and management (managerial principles, human resources management and development, financial management for health care, organizational behavior, and interpersonal skills)

- Quantitative methods and research methodologies (introductory and advanced health care statistics/epidemiology, research methods in health care)
- Health care information requirements and standards
- Health care information systems (computer applications in health care, systems analysis and design)
- Health data content and structures, classification, nomenclature and reimbursement systems, clinical quality assessment, and performance improvement
- Biomedical and health services research support
- Health information services management
- A capstone experience/practicum/project

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### Health Information Technician

Graduates of associate degree programs are known as health information technicians and conduct health data collection, monitoring, maintenance, and reporting activities in accordance with established data quality principles, legal and regulatory standards, and professional best practice guidelines. These functions encompass, among other areas, monitoring electronic and paper-based documentation and processing and using health data for billing and reporting purposes through use of various electronic systems. Common job titles held by health information technicians in today's job market include reimbursement specialist, information access and disclosure specialist, coder, medical record technician, data quality coordinator, supervisor, etc. It is anticipated that job titles will change as health care enterprises expand their reliance on information systems and technology. Health information technicians have, and will continue to assume, roles that support efforts toward the development of computer-based patient record systems and a national health information infrastructure.



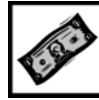
#### Career Description

The tasks or functions performed by health information technicians are numerous and continually changing within the work environment. The job title and work setting will dictate the actual tasks performed by the health information technician. However, in general, these individuals perform tasks related to the use, analysis, validation, presentation, data abstracting, analysis, coding, release of information, data privacy and security, retrieval, quality measurement, and control of health care data regardless of the physical medium in which information is maintained. Their task responsibilities may also include supervising personnel.



#### Employment Characteristics

Presently, opportunities for practice are found in numerous settings such as acute care general hospitals, managed care organizations, physician office practices, home health care agencies, long-term care facilities, correctional facilities, behavioral health care organizations, insurance companies, ambulatory settings, and state and federal health care agencies, and public health departments. Practice opportunities are unlimited.



#### Salary

According to AHIMA, entry-level salaries average between \$25,000 and \$50,000. Refer to Section IV, Table 5 of this *Directory* for more information, or see [www.ama-assn.org/go/hpsalary](http://www.ama-assn.org/go/hpsalary).



#### Educational Programs

**Length.** Programs are generally 2 years, offering an associate degree.

**Prerequisites.** High school diploma or equivalent.

**Curriculum.** In addition to general education courses, the professional component of the technician program requires:

- Biomedical sciences (anatomy, physiology, language of medicine, disease processes, and pharmacology)
- Information technology (microcomputer applications and computers in health care)
- Health data content and structure
- Health care delivery systems, organization and supervision, health care statistics, and data literacy
- Clinical quality assessment and performance improvement
- Clinical classification systems
- Reimbursement methodologies
- Legal and ethical issues
- Supervised professional practice experiences in health information departments of health care facilities and agencies



#### Inquiries

##### Careers and Credentialing

American Health Information Management Association  
233 N Michigan Avenue, Suite 2150  
Chicago, IL 60601-5800  
312 233-1100  
[www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org)

##### Program Accreditation

Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM)  
233 N Michigan Avenue, Suite 2150  
Chicago, IL 60601-5800  
312 233-1129  
312 233-1429 Fax  
E-mail: [george.payan@cahiim.org](mailto:george.payan@cahiim.org)  
[www.cahiim.org](http://www.cahiim.org)