

Health Information Technician

Definition of Health Information Management

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



Career Description

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.

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 \$30,000 and \$50,000. For more information, refer to 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

www.healthinformationcareers.com

Professional Credentialing

American Health Information Management Association
233 N Michigan Avenue, Suite 2150
Chicago, IL 60601-5800
312 233-1100
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
312 233-1100
312 233-1429 Fax
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