Margaret A. Skurka, Editor

Health Information Management

Sixth Edition

Principles and Organization for Health Information Services

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MARGARET A. SKURKA
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PREFACE

Health Information Management: Principles and Organization for Health Information Services, sixth edition, recognizes the continuing need for guidance in developing efficient health information management (HIM) systems for healthcare institutions. This important revision of the 2003 edition is designed to capture the significant changes in the HIM field and profession in recent years.

The first edition of this book was published in 1984, and it replaced *Medical Record Departments in Hospitals: Guide to Organization*, which had originally been published by the American Hospital Association in 1962 and revised in 1972. Second and third editions of the book were published in 1988 and 1994, respectively, under the title *Organization of Medical Record Departments in Hospitals*. The fifth edition was published by Jossey-Bass in 2003.

This book serves as a comprehensive general reference to patient medical records and HIM. It is useful to a healthcare institution's chief executive, chief operating and financial officers, and information systems technology personnel. It is also essential reading for health professionals who need a general overview and understanding of HIM practices. The text also covers appropriate information for faculty and students in health information administration and technology educational programs. It serves as an introduction to HIM practices and issues for information systems. In addition, individuals in smaller healthcare institutions will find this book useful in applying the basic principles of HIM. As the appropriate application of

these basic principles requires a careful analysis of the individual healthcare institution's needs, various operations in HIM are discussed herein. The healthcare industry continues to undergo constant change and the technology used in managing health information has experienced very rapid change.

Throughout this book, the term *health information management practitioner* will encompass both the registered health information administrator (RHIA) and the registered health information technician (RHIT). Both levels of the profession hold a variety of positions within the HIM discipline. These include management and supervisory positions, as well as clinical documentation specialists, coders, quality managers, and more.

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) has over 100,000 members. Many additional credentials are available for HIM professionals besides the long-standing RHIA and RHIT. Readers are encouraged to visit the website, www.ahima.org, for a significant amount of information regarding the field and the profession.

—Margaret A. Skurka

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A significant thank you goes out to my contributing authors for this sixth edition of *Health Information Management: Principles and Organization for Health Information Services.* Without their assistance, this work would not have been possible. They each contributed their long-time experience in the specific areas of health information management in which they work and/or teach, which gives this text a hands-on feeling. They were timely and on point, consistently.

Thank you:

Felecia Williams

Linda Galocy

Dilhari R. DeAlmeida

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Dorinda M. Sattler

Sandra K. Rains

Margie White (deceased)

Karen Wright

Janelle Wapola

Katie Kerr

A special thank you also goes to my two work colleagues at Indiana University Northwest, Linda Galocy and Dorinda Sattler, who shouldered the additional work in the department when I was on sabbatical. And, as always, a thank you to my husband Richard, who is accustomed to my long evenings in my home office at my computer. He has always understood and accepted my intensity and commitment with regard to the Health Information Management profession, and for that I am grateful.

This book is dedicated to my three now-grown children — Erik Skurka, Kirstin Skurka Johnston, and Erin Skurka. They are all young professionals working in Chicago. I wish to them in their respective fields the same wonderful 40-plus years I've enjoyed in my profession. It is a good thing to love what you do.

— Margaret A. Skurka

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CHAPTER 1

Health Information Management and the Healthcare Institution

Felecia Williams

> The more things change, the more they stay the same.
>
> —Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr

To say that the field of health care has evolved over the past decade would be an understatement, but the quote from Mr. Karr is as true today as it was the day he made the statement. But with all that has changed, some things have remained the same. People still get sick and seek care at the hospital or clinic and physicians, nurses, therapists, and a host of other health professionals continue to provide care, in hopes of a healthier world. Additionally, the terms *health* and *medical* are still used interchangeably; this is even more pronounced when speaking of health/medical records in an electronic format.

In reality, medical and health are very different colors in the wide spectrum of the field of medicine. Health care, much like the health record, is not limited by the activities or documentation of activities that take

place under the care of a physician and/or hospital. Health care not only includes services provided by a physician, but also includes a patient's lifestyle (i.e., food choices, physical activity, sleep patterns) and genetic predispositions. Where health incorporates outside forces, medical care and the medical record are driven by services provided under the care of health professionals.

Advancements in technology have changed the manner in which health information management (HIM) professionals perform their work, but it hasn't changed the work. Timely, accurate, and complete health records are still the foundations for high-functioning HIM departments, which contribute to the overall success of a hospital.

In this chapter the discussion will focus on the roles and responsibilities of professionals that work within or for the hospital and their relationship to the HIM department. This will include the Board of Trustees, the CEO/President and the Medical Staff. This chapter will also discuss the functional areas of the HIM department, the HIM professional, and finally, the interactions between HIM and other departments and healthcare professionals within the facility.

Figure 1.1 shows a sample hospital organization chart. In this case, the HIM department's executive reporting structure falls under the medical staff. This is not always the case. To begin the discussion on the hospital hierarchy and roles of key players, it should be noted that the role of HIM is not restricted to a single reporting line.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the top of a hospital hierarchy resides the Board of Directors. The board of directors for a hospital, or any organization for that matter, has the ultimate responsibility for the success and/or failure of the organization. Members of the Board of Directors are generally leaders in their professional area of study, which is not restricted to health care, and are also considered to be upstanding citizens in the community. These members may be

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