



THE NORTHLINE

AKHIMA Mission Statement

Our Mission is to promote the art and science of health information management by achieving and maintaining high standards of competency, developing education programs, and promoting professional growth.

Along with physicians, hospital administrators, and other health professionals, we continually strive to improve the quality of health care information for all Alaskans. We endeavor to meet challenges of a changing health care delivery system by providing competent assistance and contributions within the scope of our profession.

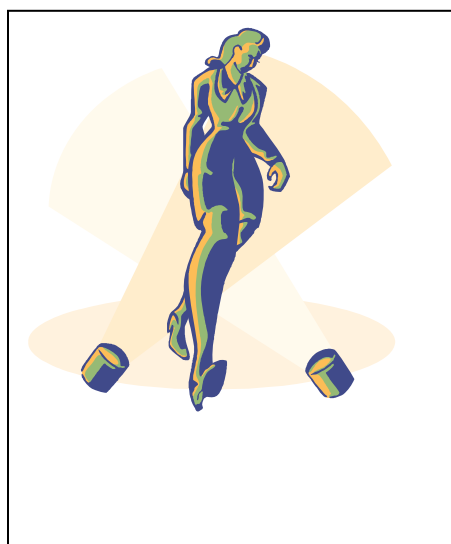
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Renee Skeels, RHIT

As I sit here writing this message, it is hard to believe that my time as AKHIMA President has almost come to an end. Serving in this role over the past year has been an extremely rewarding experience and I am going to miss serving the members of AkHIMA in this capacity.

Over the past year, the AKHIMA Board and Committees have been working diligently to better meet the needs of AKHIMA members and our profession. Again, I am going to ask everyone to please consider running for an office, helping on a committee, writing an article for the newsletter or to make whatever contribution to the Association that you can.

I look forward to serving as your Past-President during this coming year. I am sincerely grateful, for the trust that you placed in me and the opportunities that were provided.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Carol Liberty, MS, RHIA, has finally done it. She officially retired from the University of Alaska Southeast, Sitka Campus, as the program director for the RHIT program. Carol was hired many years ago to create the program, first through distance delivery via the phone lines, and then began the process of She has many HIM students working and living in Alaska – thanks Carol, for helping your students achieve excellence in the HIM profession!

Congratulations Carol on your well deserved retirement. We will miss you and your photo album full of past students at our annual meetings. Best of luck in your future!

INCOMING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Doreen Booth, RHIT

Wow, another successful Annual Spring Conference has come and gone. What a great program the committee prepared for all of us!

While at the Annual Spring Conference, I was reflecting on our association. I have been involved with health information management for 30 years. Oh my gosh, I can't believe it has been that long! We are so grateful to Carol Liberty, who started the HIT program at the University of Alaska Southeast and gave so many of us a chance to fulfill our dreams of getting a college education and certification as an RHIT while raising families and holding down full time jobs. I know my certification changed my life. I looked around the room and it was great to see old friends that I have come to know through AKHIMA. It was also exciting to see so many new faces and a chance to get to know them also.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the board members that have served our association over the years. It is their dedication, hard work and the desire to volunteer that has made our association what it is today. AKHIMA has really grown over the years. Our members are greatly respected in their various job duties.

I hope each one of you will consider participating in AKHIMA – think about volunteering on a committee or running for office. Please take a few minutes and log onto the Geographic: Alaska Communities of Practice. This is a great tool that we can all use to network and learn from each other. Our association needs your help.

Don't forget that the AHIMA National Convention is being held in Seattle this October. It will never be closer to Alaska than this! If you can, please plan on attending. I guarantee that you won't regret the experience. The Washington association has asked us to help out with various duties. If you are planning on attending and would like to volunteer, please contact me at Doreen@akhima.org.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to serve as your President this year. I hope I will be able to continue to lead AKHIMA to continued growth and success. Congratulations to the newly elected board members. It will be an honor to serve with all of you. I hope you have a great summer and I look forward to this year and working with all of you.

Make Your Vote Count!

AHIMA elections are officially open. Log in to myahima, then into the communities of practice and make your vote count! The official voting period begins at 9 a.m. eastern time on June 17, 2008 and continues until 5:00 p.m. eastern time on June 30, 2008.

Be an active AHIMA member! Vote in the national elections!



AKHIMA Board of Directors

2007-2008 Board of Directors:

Renee Skeels, RHIT, President
 Doreen Booth, RHIT, President Elect
 Sharena Sanders, RHIT, Past-President
 Cathy Gross, RHIT, 2nd-Year Director
 Karen Glaser, RHIA, CCS, 1st Year Director
 Michael Gage, RHIT CCS, Secretary
 Terry Keith, RHIA, Treasurer



COMPLIANCE CORNER

By Dawn Carmen, Esq, RHIT, FACHE

Move over, fraudulent coding and billing, as top priority for government enforcers. Make way as quality of care takes the spotlight. Patient safety groups such as the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and Leapfrog Group have long advocated for reducing preventable medical mistakes and improving the quality of health care. Do you recall media attention to the patient who died from getting the wrong blood type during surgery or the patient who sued for sponges left in the body after surgery? These mistakes, "never events", are occurrences that should never happen in a hospital and can be prevented.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and health insurers are aligning their payment policy with high quality, efficient care. Since October 1, 2007 hospitals have been required to report Medicare claims including secondary diagnoses codes as "present on admission" (POA) indicators. Please refer to the following link for official guidance on POA coding and reporting:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd9/POAguideSep06.pdf>

Effective October 1, 2008, Medicare will no longer pay for increased costs associated with eight preventable never events CMS terms "hospital-acquired conditions"

(HACs) that happen during a patient's hospital stay. They are:

1. Serious preventable event - object left in during surgery
2. Serious preventable event - air embolism
3. Serious preventable event - blood incompatibility
4. Catheter-associated urinary tract infection
5. Pressure ulcers
6. Vascular catheter-associated infections
7. Surgical site infection - mediastinitis after coronary artery bypass graft
8. Patient falls

Why these HACs? CMS selected these 8 HACs because they are high cost, high volume, or both; they result in a higher paying DRG; and they could reasonably have been prevented by the application of evidence-based guidelines. Put simply, CMA asserts that if hospitals follow good patient care practices, HACs won't happen. Medicare expects to save \$20M annually with the HAC initiative. Critics including the American Medical Association argue that the policy could discourage hospitals from caring for the sickest patients who are most vulnerable to HACs. When HACs are present on admission, there will not be a financial penalty for care associated with the HAC. Also, HAC penalties will not apply to critical access hospital – yet. For details on the October 1, 2008 HACs, see the Federal Register starting on page 47200

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20071800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/pdf/07-3820.pdf>

But wait, there's more! In April 2008, CMS proposed expanding the HAC list with 9 more no pay conditions:

1. Surgical site infections following elective procedures
2. Legionnaires' Disease
3. Glycemic control
4. Iatrogenic pneumothorax
5. Delirium
6. Ventilator-associated pneumonia
7. Deep vein thrombosis/pulmonary embolism
8. *Staphylococcus aureus* septicemia
9. *Clostridium difficile*-associated disease

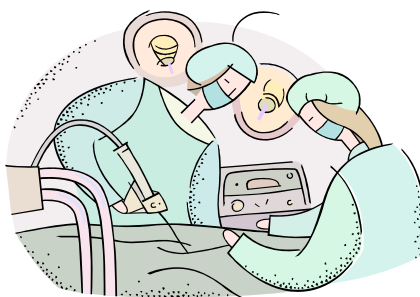
Proponents of the expanded list say that there is solid evidence that the proposed 9 HACs are preventable. On the other hand, a representative of the American Hospital Association said that some conditions such as delirium and *C.diff.* lack strong evidence of preventability. For more information on the proposed HAC expansion, visit

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/media/press/factsheet.asp?Counter=3042&intNumPerPage=10&checkDate=&checkKey=&srchType=1&numDays=3500&srchOpt=0&srchData=&keywordType=All&chkNewsType=6&intPage=&showAll=&pYear=&year=&desc=false&cboOrder=date>

HIM professionals play a key role in HAC data collection and analysis. AHIMA has just published a timely article on one hospital's analysis of HAC data:

http://library.ahima.org/xpedio/groups/public/documents/ahima/bok1_038461.hcsp?dDocName=bok1_038461

In summary, accurate documentation and coding impact quality of care in the eyes of the payers and regulatory enforcers more than ever.



SPRING PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

By Cathy Gross, RHIT, Program Chair

It was once again a successful spring conference. Kelly Butler, MD, CCS, spent two days with AKHIMA members and other attendees discussing modifiers, OB complications, hypertension and a multitude of other coding topics. By special arrangement, two moose visited the conference center on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. After warning attendees of the dangers of aggressive moose, Kelly Butler and Cathy Gross successfully tracked one to the parking lot and scored some pictures . . .



Wednesday, April 30th, was officially recognized as Coder's Appreciation Day. A proclamation was received from Governor Sara Palin and was posted in the main room of the BP Energy Center throughout the conference. AKHIMA has requested and received this proclamation for several years now, in recognition of coders throughout the state.

On Thursday and Friday, breakout sessions were offered again this year, with tracks in coding, management and quality improvement. Attendees were able to choose which track to attend. The tracks seem to be a popular segment of our conferences now, and we hope to continue to offer this every spring. It seems that each year the AKHIMA conference offers more to attendees for educational opportunities. We have grown over the past years to approximately 250 members. Wow! What growth, and what opportunity to network with others who work in the HIM arena.



Our AHIMA liaison, Renae Spohn, spoke on project management, as well as giving the annual update. We also had topics such as coding for telehealth, never events, and forensics. We were very fortunate that Doreen Booth was able to arrange a tour of the Alaska Psychiatric Institute, a new state of the art facility located in Anchorage.

And last, but most importantly, we did not put out sign up sheets for the following committees: Vendor, Silent Auction, Fall and Spring Conference. If you would like to volunteer for any of these committees, contact Karen Glaser, RHIT, CCS at karen@akhima.org. This is your opportunity to step forward and be a part of the continued growth of AKHIMA, your organization! Volunteers need not be credentialed to be appointed to any committee.



Official Proclamation by Governor Sarah Palin

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STATE OF ALASKA



Executive Proclamation by Sarah Palin, Governor

WHEREAS, the American Health Information Management Association and the American Academy of Professional Coders have achieved a distinguished record of professional achievement to the medical profession by continually promoting higher standards through integrity and dedication.

WHEREAS, professional medical coders provide invaluable support to physicians, clinics, hospitals, and patients.

WHEREAS, these professionals assign identifying codes for all types of services, treatment, and procedures provided to patients in a medical setting.

WHEREAS, professional medical coders both communicate effectively with members of the medical community and read clinician reports, determining the reason each service was rendered before assigning procedural, diagnostic, encounter, and supply codes.

WHEREAS, by submitting proper documentation to insurers and state and federal agencies, medical coders safeguard the integrity and promote the financial success of their employers as well as assisting them in complying with various federal and state regulations.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Health Information Management Association, a component state association of the American Health Information Management Association, offers continuing education through professional interaction, workshops, quarterly newsletters, and an annual conference, with outreach to other professional coders.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sarah Palin, Governor of the state of Alaska, hereby proclaim April 30, 2008, as:

State Professional Coders Appreciation and Acknowledgment Day

in Alaska, and strongly encourage observance of this day to recognize professionals in medical coding for their contribution to the medical community.

Dated: April 14, 2008



Sarah Palin, Governor
who has also authorized the
seal of the State of Alaska to
be affixed to this proclamation.

AHIMA IS COMING TO THE WEST COAST!

AHIMA's 80th Annual Convention and Exhibit will be held October 13-15 in Seattle, Washington. It will never be closer to Alaska than this – plan on attending. The 2008 AHIMA Convention and Exhibit presents incomparable opportunities to connect with your colleagues and learn from key leaders who influence change in health information management. Take advantage of the exceptional educational sessions, explore the exhibit hall and network with fellow HIM professionals. Registration can be found on AHIMA's website: <http://www.ahima.org/>



BE A VOLUNTEER -- AHIMA and WASHIMA want you!

The 2008 AHIMA National Convention will be held in Seattle, Washington. AHIMA and WASHIMA have extended an invitation to AKHIMA members who are planning to attend the opportunity to volunteer in many different capacities during this week long event. If you would like to participate in this great opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the nation and advance yourself professionally by volunteering, go to <http://www.wshima.org/vol.html> and complete the registration form online.

AKHIMA hopes to have a strong showing at the national convention – please plan on attending. We hope to see you there!



AKHIMA Wants You Too!

AKHIMA needs your help. Each year, we are in desperate need of volunteers to help with the following committees: Program; Silent Auction; Vendors; Registration Table; Stuffing Bags. Can you help us out? If so, please contact Karen Glaser, RHIT, CCS, 2nd Year Director at karen@akhima.org.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Hello AKHIMA members! Would you like an opportunity to help your organization? Try submitting an article for the Northline! We'd like to have a variety of member submitted articles for inclusion in our publications.

BULLETIN BOARD

Coding Technician

[Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation](#), PO Box 130, Dillingham, AK 99576 Call 907.842.5201 ext 6234 fax 907.842.9251. [Email](#) for more information.. Apply [online](#). 02.01.08

Coder/Biller

Valley Medical Care, Juneau: Certified coder with full range of Family Practice inpatient & outpatient coding experience including OB for 12-provider group. Contact Leigh Ann Rose - call 907-586-2434, or write to: 1801 Salmon Creek Lane, Juneau, AK 99801 [Email](#) for more information.10.14.07

[Chart Review Representative, Inpatient Coder, Outpatient Coding Specialist.](#)

[Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium](#), 4000 Ambassador Drive · Anchorage, AK 99508. Phone: 907-729-1900. Fax: 729-1901. [Apply online](#) [www.anthc.org](#) for more info 907-729-1319 or [Email](#). 2.07.08

[Inpatient coder, remote and intermittent Coding Concepts, Inc.](#)

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877-277-2501 Office Toll Free
907-277-2501 Office

Update Your AHIMA Profile

And yet again another reminder to update your AHIMA profile. Email addresses are downloaded from the national organization's web site. We use this information to send you newsletters, updates on what your board is doing, as well as important information related to HIM and coding issues. Please remember to take a moment of your time to ensure that your profile is up to date. If the addresses are not current, email in-boxes are overloaded with returns . . . you can update your information anytime at: <http://www.ahima.org/>



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

FALL 2008 CODING WORKSHOP

November 6 & 7, 2008

AKHIMA 2009 SPRING CONFERENCE

May 5-8, 2009

AKHIMA Conferences held at:

BP Energy Center
Anchorage, Alaska

AHIMA NATIONAL CONVENTION SCHEDULE

Seattle, Washington

~ Oct. 11-16, 2008

Grapevine, Texas

~ Oct. 3-8, 2009

Orlando, Florida

~ Sept. 25 – 30, 2010

Salt Lake City, Utah

~ October 1-6, 2011

Chicago, Illinois

~ September 28 – October 4, 2012

HIM Humor

Medicalese:

Aaah: 1) What the doctor tells the patient to say before gagging the patient to the max 2) Word preceding expletive when one receives the medical bill.

