

Module 15 Assignment 2: Final Research Paper

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The continual evolution of technology, the federal mandates issued through or in accordance with the ARRA and ACA, and various initiatives has brought about many changes in the HIM profession. These changes have created an environment for existing HIM roles to evolve and new HIM roles to emerge. The HIM profession is becoming a more increasingly significant, integral team member of the medical and health insurance industry. The roles that are evolving and emerging for HIM professionals are reaching beyond the walls of the business and financial departments. HIM roles are now and will continue to expand into playing an important role in the overall healthcare of patients.

A new role that has emerged as a result of providers achieving Meaningful Use of EHRs is Master Patient Index (MPI) Coordinator (Cassidy, 2014). The role may also be titled Enterprise Master Patient Index (EMPI) Coordinator or Identity Coordinator. In 2013, HIMSS and AHIMA collaborated on a study, *Trends in HIE Organizational Staffing*. In this study, Master Patient Index functions were one of the top two positions that are the most difficult operations position to fill and lists this position as a top operational job in demand. Employers are facing staffing challenges in this role due to the lack of available, qualified candidates. As the study suggests, there is definitely a gap that HIM professionals can fill. Not only is there a current gap to fill, the demand in this field is expected to increase in the future due to the implementation of the EHR and the movement of sharing patient information among providers.

Patient matching or patient identity has become a top priority. In June of 2014, the ONC released a 10 year vision to achieve an interoperable health information technology infrastructure which identifies patient matching a part of its three year agenda (Lusk, Noreen, Okafor, Peterson, Pupo, 2014).

Since master patient indexes are so vital to the success of the Health Information Exchange's interoperability, the opportunities as a Master Patient Index Coordinator will continue grow.

Population Health Management (PHM) is a recent trend that is gaining traction in the medical and health insurance industries. Several factors are playing key roles in the progression of this trend that will bring a promising niche for HIM professionals in the future. Some of the main key factors that are giving traction to using PHM as a tool is the implementation of ICD-10-CM, the continual evolution of data technology and how the data is being manipulated, how insurance payment reimbursements are evolving, and how government agencies and insurance companies are embracing the concept to reduce costs.

What are Population Health Management Programs? In the blog, *Five Ways HIM Professionals Can Contribute to the Population Health Management Revolution*, Eramo states:

“In this age of data-driven healthcare, population health monitoring (PHM) programs are springing up everywhere. These new and emerging programs rely on health care data and health information management technology (HIMT) to manage and monitor patients who are healthy as well as those who are at risk for health problems and/or chronic conditions. The goal is to keep patients as healthy as possible, thereby reducing costs for expensive interventions. According to the Institute for Health Technology Transformation, the objective is to “modify the factors that make people sick or exacerbate their illnesses.”

The skill set that HIM professionals possess is vital to the success of the PHM programs. AHIMA has even dubbed PHM as the “next HIM frontier” (Eramo, 2014). In his blog, Eramo lists the following five ways that HIM professionals can contribute to PHM programs to help ensure success: 1) Capture, validate, and maintain data on which clinical decisions are based, 2) Articulate what the data means and how it can be used to perform decision support,

3) Ensure data integrity and accuracy, 4) Explain limitations of current information systems, 5) Drive change within the organizations.

The implementation of ICD-10-CM is being utilized for more than improved coding. How this improved coding is being manipulated for data is key. ICD-10-CM codes provide more extensive detail and specificity than ICD-9-CM codes did. The more extensive detail and specificity that ICD-10-CM codes provide is expected to impact the growth of PHM programs (Katner, 2014).

Health insurance providers, especially CMS, is paying more attention to the population health model (Owen, 2015). In the article, *HIMs Future in Population Health Management*, Owen states, “The shift in how the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services plans to pay health care organizations is driving traditional providers to embrace the population health model.” This shift in payment structure will require more information with greater specificity that will enable providers to understand the populations they manage (Owen, 2015). The HIM profession is on the forefront of this data revolution which will make people in this profession a strategic player in PHM programs.

In the past, the importance of patient identity matching has not been as important as it is now or will be in the future. Healthcare services, data, and technology is becoming ever increasingly globalized (Desai, 2013). With an aging population, people in general are living longer, and the advancement in medical technology and treatments, people are in need of varying care across the healthcare spectrum. In the future, there will continue to be a focus on the continuum of patient care

Due to the continuum of patient care by multiple providers that is enabled through the use of EHRs, an aging population that continues to increase, and globalization of data, the need for Enterprise Master Patient Index Coordinators (aka Identity or MPI Coordinators) will continue to increase in the future. As health insurance providers and government agencies capitalize on the availability of data to identify trends in occurrence, prevalence, and management of health conditions to improve healthcare while cutting costs, PHM programs will become more prevalent (Desai, 2013). Both the EMPI (MPI) Coordinator and PHM roles for HIM professionals are positions that can be secured now and in the future.

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