WAUBONSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Health Information Technology

2025 - 2026

Student Handbook

CAHIIM ACCREDITED PROGRAM™

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I. Welcome

Welcome to Waubonsee Community College (WCC) associate degree in Health Information Technology (HIT) Program! We have developed this handbook to assist you in understanding your role as a student in the program and includes academic information concerning your HIT courses and specific policies/procedures that complement the Waubonsee Student Handbook.

Hard-work, professionalism, and dedication to your studies are hallmarks for success and cornerstones of the HIT program. At Waubonsee, we expect that you are a self-directed learner who can think critically and is an active participant in the learning process. The HIT curriculum is designed to prepare you for a successful career in the Health Information Management (HIM) field. Through firsthand learning activities and simulations, you will gain the valuable skills needed in a variety of areas such as coding, data analysis and leadership. The courses are sequenced in a way to ensure you master the necessary skills to be successful in upper-level classes.

As healthcare rules, laws and finance are in a constant state of change, health information management professionals must be dedicated to life-long learning. There are many opportunities to advance your career by earning additional professional credentials, and the HIT degree is a great place to begin. We wish you good luck and much success in our program!

Patricia Saccone, MA, RHIA, CDIP, CCS-P, CPB
Professor/ Program Director

This Student Handbook for the Associate Degree Health Information Technology supplements the Waubonsee Community College Catalog and the Waubonsee Community College Student Handbook. The provisions of this handbook do not constitute a contract, expressed or implied, between any applicant or student and any faculty member of Waubonsee Community College.

A. Faculty and Dean Information

Professor :

- Patricia Saccone, MA, RHIA, CDIP, CCS-P, CPB
  Aurora Campus 367,
  (630) 801-7900, ex. 4194 psaccone@waubonsee.edu
  MA – Master of Arts in Teaching, Concordia University
  BA - St. Mary's College
  Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Health Information Management, Univ. of Illinois, Chicago

- M'Kaila Clark, RHIA, SSCP
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Division Dean:
Robert Cofield
Dean for Health Professions and Public Service
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Waubonsee Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, veteran's status, marital status, disability or any other characteristic protected by law in its programs and activities.

For more information on the college's nondiscrimination policies, contact the director of Human Resources at (630) 466-7900, ext. 2367; Waubonsee Community College, Route 47 at Waubonsee Dr., Sugar Grove, IL 60554-9454. Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct

B. Program Philosophy

It is our belief that excellence in teaching, service to the community, an emphasis on ethical, professional behavior, a high-quality academic program that offers innovative curricula and the latest advancements in technology, will prepare students for health information careers in a global economy.

C. Program Mission

II. Our mission of the Health Information Technology Program is to offer a comprehensive and relevant curriculum that aligns with the needs of our communities of interest, workforce demands, and core values of the health information management field. Our program aims to educate and train students to become skilled health information technicians who can effectively collect, analyze, and manage health data to support healthcare providers and improve patient care. With a focus on faculty expertise and industry best practices, we are committed to nurturing a diverse and inclusive learning environment that fosters critical thinking, ethical decision making, and lifelong learning. By integrating emerging technologies and upholding the principles of integrity, confidentiality, and accuracy, our program seeks to produce accomplished professionals who play a vital role in advancing healthcare information management and positively impacting the overall health outcomes.

III. Accreditation – CAHIIM

The Health Information Technology accreditor of Waubonsee Community College is the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM). The College's accreditation for associate degree in Health Information Technology has been reaffirmed through 2023. All inquiries about the program's accreditation status should be directed by mail to CAHIIM, 200 East Randolph Street, Suite 5100, Chicago, IL, 60601; by phone at (312) 235-3255; or by email at info@cahiim.org.

A. Guiding Professional Organization – AHIMA

The health information technology professional organization is the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). The association's professional publication is the Journal of AHIMA, published monthly. An informative web site is maintained which can provide valuable information to enhance student learning at www.ahima.org. Health Information Technology students are encouraged to join AHIMA after completion of the Core Program requirements. Student membership comes with a subscription to the Journal of AHIMA, access to a wealth of information on the AHIMA web site, and automatic membership in the Illinois Health Information Technology Association.

"The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is the leading voice and authority in health information, wherever it is found. Our people work at the intersection of healthcare, technology, and business. While our patients do not often see us, we see our patients in a way no other healthcare professional does. That is because AHIMA-certified professionals ensure that sensitive health stories remain accurate, accessible, protected and complete—at all times." (Who We Are, n.d.)

B. Industry Credentials

Health information technicians entering the field have an associate degree. Employers prefer to hire Registered Health Information Technicians (RHIT). This credential is awarded to a person who has passed a written examination offered by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). To qualify for the examination, a person must graduate from a two-year associate degree program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM). The Health Information Technology program at Waubonsee Community College was accredited by CAHIIM as of October of 2013. Only graduates of an accredited health information management program are eligible for the national American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) certification examination to become RHIT certified. Graduates of the Waubonsee HIT program are also eligible to sit numerous industry credentials offered by AHIMA and AAPC.

C. Learning

Today's new graduates must be able to problem solve and make decisions within a constantly changing environment. Therefore, HIT faculty recognize the need to prepare them not only with the knowledge of the discipline, but also the cognitive skills that facilitate the transfer to higher order thinking. The faculty therefore subscribes to the following beliefs about learning occurs in the cognitive (understanding), affective (attitude), and psychomotor (motor skill) domains.

- Learning is defined as an active and reflective lifelong process whereby the learner acquires new knowledge, skills or attitudes.
- Learning is a collaborative and cooperative process.
- Students must be self-directed and responsible and accountable for their own learning.
- Self-awareness of one's learning style is necessary for the student to accomplish program outcomes.
- Students learn best when they actively transfer prior learning and experiences to newly acquired content.
- A student's knowledge, skills, and attitudes can best be acquired when applied in active clinical experiences.

- Self, peer, and instructor evaluation of learning are valuable means for developing independence.
- Learners tend to incorporate the attitudes and values of those who serve as role models.
- Group interaction provides an opportunity for the learner to better understand personal attitudes.

D. Teaching

Teaching and learning are a partnership in which the teacher's responsibility is to structure and facilitate an optimal environment for learning through clearly defined educational objectives. Knowledge is constructed uniquely and individually, in multiple ways, through a variety of tools, resources, and contexts. Teaching strategies and assessment will be grounded in educational theory and evidenced-based teaching practices. In accord with these beliefs, the curriculum has been arranged so that the knowledge acquired from each course is foundational and provides scaffolding for critical thinking development in each subsequent course.

IV. Program Outcomes

- Evaluate data content, structure and information governance for compliance.
- Apply privacy and security strategies for access, use and disclosure of health information.
- Evaluate data sources for clinical, financial and operational processes.
- Validate compliance and regulatory requirements of the revenue cycle.
- Apply health law and compliance impacting health information management.
- Demonstrate best practices of organizational leadership management in health information technology.

V. Institutional Learning Outcomes

- Communication: Use clear language to communicate meaning appropriate to various contexts and audiences.
- Critical Thinking: Analyze information in order to construct an argument or solution.
- Global Awareness: Describe the interconnectedness of issues, trends or systems using diverse perspectives.
- Information Literacy: Use technology to ethically research, evaluate or create information.
- Quantitative Literacy: Make judgements or draw appropriate conclusions based on the quantitative analysis of data.

VI. Health Information Technology Associate in Applied Science Degree Curriculum

The Health Information Technology curriculum is designed to provide students with the opportunities to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes of a health information technology professional as specified in the Entry Level Competencies, Domains and Subdomains in Appendix II. Domains represent major areas of responsibilities or duties involved in the profession at the associate degree levels. A domain is divided into Subdomains that are further divided into tasks. Tasks specify the activities performed the goal of the work activity and how it is accomplished. The Domains, Subdomains, and Tasks list the abilities expected of a health information technology graduate upon entry into the profession. These statements serve many purposes. They are used to design and evaluate the Health Information Technology curriculum to assure that the graduates will be prepared to practice in today's health care field. The curriculum sequence is planned to allow students the greatest chance for success and graduation. The Entry Level Competencies, Domains and Subdomains illustrate in which course the Subdomains are covered. They also serve as the basis for the formulation of the national certification exams. Hence, it is extremely important that Health Information Technology students be knowledgeable of the abilities that will be expected of them upon entry into the career.

A. Program Courses

General Education Requirements	**Credits**
BIO 260 Human Structure and Function	4
COM 100 /121 Fundamentals of Speech Communications	3
ENG 101/151 First-year Composition	3
ENG 102/152 First-year Composition II	3
Social Science Elective	3
Program Courses	
CIS 110 Business Information Systems	3
MTH 107 Statistics	3
HIT 100 Introduction to Health Information Mgmt.	4
HIT 110 Medical Terminology	3
HIT 142 Legal & Ethical Issues in Healthcare	3
HIT 210 Diagnostic Coding	3
HIT 212 Inpatient Coding	3
HIT 215 CPT Coding	3
HIT 216 Advanced Coding	3
HIT 218 Reimbursement Systems	3
HIT 220 Pathophysiology and Pharmacology	3
HIT 242 Healthcare Computer Applications	3
HIT 246 Healthcare Statistics and Data Analysis	3
HIT 252 Organizational Management and Leadership	3
HIT 299 Professional Practicum Experience	1
Total Semester Hours	**60**

B. Cohort Pathway: AAS Degree

1st Semester (Fall)	**2nd Semester (Spring)**
○ HIT 101 (4) –Introduction to HIM ○ HIT 110 (3) – Medical Terminology ○ BIO 260 (4) – Human Structure and Function ○ ENG 101 (3) – First-Year Composition I ○ MTH 107 (3) – Statistics ○ **Total Credits = 17**	○ HIT 142 (3) –Legal/Ethical Issues in H/C ○ HIT 210 (3) – Diagnostic Coding ○ HIT 220 (3) – Pathophysiology/Pharmacology ○ CIS 110 (3) – Business Information Systems ○ ENG 102 (3) –First-Year Composition II ○ **Total Credits = 15**
3rd Semester (Fall)	**4th Semester (Spring)**
○ HIT 212 (3) – IP Proc Coding ○ HIT 215 (3) – CPT Coding ○ HIT 242 (3) –H/C Computer Applications ○ HIT 246 (3)- H/C Statistics/Data Analysis ○ COM100 (3) – Fund of Speech Comm ○ **Total Credits = 15**	○ HIT 216 (3)- Advanced Coding ○ HIT 218 (3) – Reimbursement Sys ○ HIT 252 (3)-Org Mgmt./Leadership ○ HIT 299 (1) – PPE ○ Social Sciences Elective (3) ○ **Total Credits = 13**

C. Medial Billing and Coding Certificate Pathway

1st Semester (Fall)	**2nd Semester (Spring)**
○ HIT 110 (3) – Medical Terminology ○ HIT 120 (3) –Medical Office Procedures ○ BIO 260 (4) – Human Structure and Function ○ CIS 110 (3) – Business Information Systems ○ **Total Credits = 13**	○ HIT 130 (3) –Medical Insurance and Reimbursements ○ HIT 142 (3) –Legal/Ethical Issues in H/Care ○ HIT 220 (3) – Pathophysiology/Pharmacology ○ HIT 210 (3) – Diagnostic Coding ○ HIT 215 (3) – CPT Coding ○ **Total Credits = 15**

VII. Application and Admittance to the Program

A. Progression and Retention

The HIT curriculum has been designed with specific learning progressions in mind. The purposeful sequencing of HIT courses builds upon each other and prepares each student for more complex and challenging coursework at the next level. The student must complete prerequisites of each course prior to enrolling in the next course. Students are required to receive a minimum grade of "C" in all HIT and supporting courses as specified in the college catalog and must repeat any HIT or supporting course in which they receive a final grade of less than a "C."

Due to the nature of the profession, the HIT course content is updated on an annual basis. Students not completing the program within four years are subject to re-taking an HIT course or by demonstrating skill proficiency via exam. Continuation of the program will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the program faculty. Students who are inactive for one semester are considered to no longer be in the program and must re-apply.

VIII. Credit by Exam

If you have training or work experience that you feel has sufficiently covered the material in an HIT course; you may consider taking a proficiency exam to be awarded credit for that class. This might apply to someone who attended a non-accredited school or training program or someone who has long-time, direct experience in the field.

Proficiency exams are available for several HIT classes, except for the Professional Practice Experience courses. If you have discussed the option with a faculty member or program director and have determined that you are prepared to earn credit by exam, please email the Program Director, Patricia Saccone psaccone@waubonsee.edu with your full name, student ID number (X00...) and the course(s) you would like to test.

The rules for credit by exam:

- Credit by proficiency examination may be granted to students who are registered and in good standing (2.0 GPA) at Waubonsee Community College for proficiency in subject matter.
- Students must achieve 80% or better to receive proficiency credit for the class.
- A maximum of 6 semester hours of coursework may be received through proficiency.
- Proficiency credit is posted on the transcript.
- Students can only take an exam once.
- Students must NOT be enrolled in the course that they are testing or previously taken the course and received a D or F.
- Exams are offered on an as needed basis.

IX. Proficiency Credit Based on Active/Current Credentials

The Health Information Technology program has established standard policies regarding which courses will be granted proficiency credit based on different health-related active/current credentials. A maximum of 12 semester hours can be granted. Proficiency credit is contingent on verification of credentials.

Credential	Courses Waived
AHIMA	
CCS	HIT110, HIT 210, HIT 212, HIT 220
CCS-P	HIT 110, HIT 215, HIT 220
AAPC	
CPC, CPC-A, CPC-H	HIT 110, HIT 215, HIT 220

Please contact the dean for the form to request proficiency credit.

X. Student Responsibilities

A. Computer Skills

It is expected, at minimum, that students beginning the Health Information Technology program have the necessary skills to be effective in an online supported learning environment. All face-to-face courses will have an online supplement and many are offered online. During the program students will learn and use Microsoft Suite and learn and use vendor specific Health Information Technology related software. Prior to program admission, at minimum, a student should be able to:

- Send and receive emails
- Attach a file to an email
- Download files from an email
- Perform an Internet search
- Create folders and folder data structures
- Move/copy files from one folder to another
- Zip/unzip files

If you cannot do the above, there are additional courses that will help you learn these skills. Please see a counselor for advice on gaining these skills.

B. Professional Behavior

HIT students have an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects honesty, integrity and respect for others. Students in the HIT Program should apply these principles to his or her academic and subsequent professional career. The following information describes the professional behaviors for students in the HIT program. The expectation is that students will adhere to these Standards of Professional Behaviors in all settings - the course, practicum facilities and the college when representing the HIT Program.

- **Confidentiality:** The ability to respect the privacy of clients and to respect privileged information at medical facilities.
- **Commitment to Learning** - The ability to self- assess, self-correct, and self-direct; to identify needs and sources of learning; and to continually seek new knowledge and understanding.
- **Interpersonal Skills** - The ability to interact effectively with patients, families, colleagues, other health care professionals, and the community and to deal effectively with cultural and ethnic diversity issues.
- **Communication Skills** - The ability to communicate effectively (i.e., speaking, body language, reading, writing, listening) for varied audience and purposes.
- **Effective Use of Time and Resources** - The ability to obtain maximum benefit from a

minimum investment of time and recourses.

- **Use of Constructive Feedback** - The ability to identify sources of feedback and seek out feedback for improving personal interaction.
- **Problem Solving** - The ability to recognize and define problems, analyze data, develop and implement solutions and evaluate outcomes.
- **Professionalism** - The ability to exhibit appropriate professional conduct and to represent the professional effectively.
- **Responsibility** - The ability to fulfill commitments and to be accountable for actions and outcomes.
- **Critical Thinking** - The ability to question logically, to identify, generate, and evaluate elements of logical argument; to recognize and differentiate fact, illusions, assumptions, and hidden assumptions; and to distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant.
- **Stress Management** - The ability to identify sources of stress and to develop effective coping behaviors.
- **Punctuality and Promptness:** The ability to presents oneself on time and ready to begin at prescribed times for course and practicum assignments.
- **Professional Appearance**: The ability to adhere to established dress codes in all clinical and professional settings.
- **Civility:** The ability to practice reflective, courteous, empathetic behaviors and communication when asking questions and interacting with classmates, instructors, the college and practicum staff and clients.

C. Professional Written Communication

Along with professional behavior, students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner when communicating in writing with Waubonsee instructors, administration, employees as well as other students. Professional written communication includes but is not limited to email, discussion posts, assignments and exams. The following are additional guidelines for email and discussion posts below.

Email:

- Should include a clear subject line
- Professional greeting (good example, Dear [name] or Hello [name]; bad example: Hey, or no greeting at all)
- Use your student email address
- Use spell check and use correct grammar
- Consider that you are not sending a text message therefore avoid abbreviations
- Avoid using all CAPS as it implies you are yelling
- Proofread before sending
- Include which class you have a question about

Discussion Posts:

- Be respectful of other students' opinions

- Cite your sources
- Do not swear or use slang
- Avoid ALL CAPS
- Use Spell check and correct grammar

XI. Disciplinary Procedures

When a HIT student is alleged to have violated any of the requirements or guidelines outlined in this Handbook or in the WCC Student Code of Conduct, the college will adhere to the student disciplinary procedure. All students should review the Waubonsee Community College Student Handbook. Any HIT student found to be in violation of requirements or guidelines outlined in this Handbook or the WCC Student Handbook, including academic misconduct or the Student Code of Conduct, may be subject to discipline up to and including program dismissal and expulsion from the college.

A. Academic and Student Misconduct

Students must adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Examples of behavior that violate these standards include but are not limited to plagiarism, cheating, illegitimate possession and/or use of examinations, or assignments. Uploading assignments or exams to tutoring websites such as but not limited to Course Hero, or Chegg is a violation of Conduct and falsification of official records. One or more of the following actions (or similar actions) by a student may be grounds for immediate disciplinary action by the College and/or removal from the HIT program:

- Behavior that creates a threat to the facility to which the student is assigned and/or to the welfare of the patient/client.
- Behavior that jeopardizes the continued relationship between the college and the facility.
- Behavior that is discourteous or disrespectful.
- Violation of patient confidentiality.
- Failure to adhere to practicum facility policy and/or procedures.
- Repeated failure to follow instructions.
- Arguing with peers, health care providers, PPE site supervisor of staff, faculty and college staff.
- Use of offensive language.
- Refusal to conduct assigned duties.
- Failure to follow attendance expectations and/or procedures.

- Misrepresentation of personal competency level.
- Failure to alter behavior after constructive feedback.
- Failure to meet required professional behavior standards.
- Appearing under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Each student is responsible for knowledge of and compliance with the Waubonsee Community College Code of Student Conduct which is available through the Student Activities Office (Student Center, Room 126), from the Dean for Counseling and Student Support (Student Center, Room 274), or from the Counseling and Student Support Center (Student Center, Room 262). The Student Handbook is also available in the Health Professions and Public Service Dean's office at the Aurora Fox Valley Campus, Room 107 and at the Aurora Downtown and Plano campuses.

XII. Professional Practicum Experience – HIT 299

An important part of your education is gaining professional practice experience (PPE) prior to graduation. In the HIT 299 Professional Practice Experience, students will complete duties that are career related, progressive and challenging under the direction of a facility employee. HIT 299 requires 50 clock hours of application of theory to practice. The PPE may take place in any type of facility related to health information management (must be approved by the Program Director before registering for the course). These organizations may include hospitals, nursing facilities, home health agencies, health maintenance organizations, insurance companies, health information educational programs, state or county health departments, health care consulting, billing offices, contract research organizations, and quality improvement organizations. All activities required in the program must be educational and students must not be substituted for paid staff. If a student is already employed in the field, the student may complete their hours at their place of employment. However, they must complete work outside of their normal daily activities. Meaning, doing your job does not constitute practicum experience/hours. The practice experience is arranged cooperatively between the student and the Health Information Technology program director. Prior to participating in professional practice activities at a health care facility, students must submit to a criminal background check performed by CastleBranch. See the Program Director for more information. Additionally, students must meet the applicable health requirements set by the facility and additional requirements such as a site-specific

criminal background checks, drug screening or proof of vaccination. There is no proficiency allowed for the PPE courses.

The 50-hours are to be completed during the scheduled 8-week semester that the student enrolls in HIT 299. The PPE provides students with concentrated, uninterrupted time to observe and demonstrate the process from problem identification to resolution/identification of alternate solutions.

Students must gain approval from the Program Director before enrolling in HIT 299. Students must meet with the Program Director to complete a transcript audit and to discuss placement options for the PPE. Students are responsible for finding their own placements. It is recommended that the meeting be initiated one semester prior to all completed course work. The Program Director may be reached at psaccone@waubonsee.edu or (630) 801-7900, ext. 4142.

A. Professional Practice Attendance

Absenteeism and tardiness are considered unprofessional and undesirable traits; every effort should be made to attend each practice experience. Absences must be kept to an absolute

minimum since these create a hardship on the facility and reflect on the student's dependability. All absences must be for legitimate or emergency reasons.

The following is the procedures for reporting absences:

- Notify the PPE Site Supervisor prior to the scheduled time of arrival to explain the absence.
- Notify the PPE coordinator to report the absence

In case of emergencies and the student cannot attend the assigned practice experience, the student is to notify the coordinator and PPE Site Supervisor as soon as possible. You will need to schedule the make-up date with the PPE Site Supervisor. This will be at the convenience of the PPE Site Supervisor. Absences must be made up prior to the end of the semester. Do not ask to leave early—you are expected to complete a certain number of hours in the field to complete your PPE experience.

B. Appearance

Students must be cognizant that they represent the profession of Health Information Technology and Waubonsee Community College. A general rule is to adhere to the facility's dress code including mask or face covering requirements. Do not wear strong perfume or cologne and good personal hygiene is fully expected. If

there are questions regarding proper attire and appearance, discuss them with the PPE coordinator and Site Supervisor.

C. Ethics and Confidentiality

Through your coursework you have learned how vital the concept of confidentiality is in the Health Information Technology profession. The internship is where this knowledge is put into practice. You must be especially aware of the confidential nature of the information to which you will have access. Students are expected to:

- Adhere to the ethical guidelines set forth by AHIMA
- Abide by the Waubonsee Community College Code of Student Conduct
- Abide by applicable facility policies and procedures
- Abide by HIPAA rules

D. Disciplinary Action

The PPE facility and/or coordinator shall have the right to immediately exclude any Health Information Technology student from a PPE when it deems that the performance or conduct of the Health Information Technology student is disruptive or unethical. Any violations recorded by the PPE Site Supervisor shall be reported to the PPE Coordinator. The students will receive a 0 for the course and is subject to further disciplinary action up to removal from the program.

XIII. References

Who We Are. (n.d.). Retrieved from AHIMA.org: https://www.ahima.org/who-we-are/about-us/

Council for Excellence in Education
Health Informatics and Health Information Management

XIV. Appendix I.

2018 Health Information Management

Associate Degree Curriculum Competencies

Supporting Body of Knowledge (Prerequisite or Evidence of Knowledge)
Pathophysiology and Pharmacology
Anatomy and Physiology
Medical Terminology
Computer Concepts and Applications
Math Statistics

Additional Notes

The DM and RM competencies are to be completed in addition to all other competencies, specific to the program's chosen specialization.

DM: Competency for Associate Degree Data Management Track

RM: Competency for Associate Degree Revenue Management Track

Curriculum Guidance is provided in a separate document

Domain I. Data Governance, Content, and Structure	
Competency	**Bloom's Level**
I.1. Describe health care organizations from the perspective of key stakeholders.	2
I.2. Apply policies, regulations, and standards to the management of information.	3
I.3. Identify policies and strategies to achieve data integrity.	3
I.4. Determine compliance of health record content within the health organization.	5

I.5. Explain the use of classification systems, clinical vocabularies, and nomenclatures.	2
I.6. Describe components of data dictionaries and data sets.	2
I.6. **DM** Evaluate data dictionaries and data sets for compliance with governance standards.	5

Domain II. Information Protection: Access, Use, Disclosure, Privacy, and Security	
Competency	**Bloom's Level**
II.1. Apply privacy strategies to health information.	3
II.2. Apply security strategies to health information.	3
II.3. Identify compliance requirements throughout the health information life cycle.	3

Domain III. Informatics, Analytics, and Data Use	
Competency	**Bloom's Level**
III.1. Apply health informatics concepts to the management of health information.	3
III.2. Utilize technologies for health information management.	3
III.3. Calculate statistics for health care operations.	3
III.4. Report health care data through graphical representations.	3
III.5. Describe research methodologies used in health care.	2
III.6. Describe the concepts of managing data.	3
III.7. Summarize standards for the exchange of health information.	2

III.6. **DM** Manage data within a database system.	5

III.7. **DM** Identify standards for exchange of health information.	3

Domain IV. Revenue Cycle Management	
Competency	**Bloom's Level**
IV.1. Recognize assignment of diagnostic and procedural codes and groupings in accordance with official guidelines.	3
IV.2. Describe components of revenue cycle management and clinical documentation improvement.	2
IV.3. Summarize regulatory requirements and reimbursement methodologies.	2
IV.1. **RM** Determine diagnosis and procedure codes according to official guidelines.	5
IV.2. **RM** Evaluate revenue cycle processes.	5
IV.3. **RM** Evaluate compliance with regulatory requirements and reimbursement methodologies.	5

Domain V. Health Law & Compliance	
Competency	**Bloom's Level**
V.1. Apply legal processes impacting health information.	3
V.2. Demonstrate compliance with external forces.	3
V.3. Identify the components of risk management related to health information management.	3
V.4. Identify the impact of policy on health care.	3

Domain VI. Organizational Management & Leadership	
Competency	**Bloom's Level**

VI.1. Demonstrate fundamental leadership skills.	3
VI.2. Identify the impact of organizational change.	3
VI.3. Identify human resource strategies for organizational best practices.	3
VI.4. Utilize data-driven performance improvement techniques for decision making.	3
VI.5. Utilize financial management processes.	3
VI.6. Examine behaviors that embrace cultural diversity.	4
VI.7. Assess ethical standards of practice.	5
VI.8. Describe consumer engagement activities.	2
VI.9. Identify processes of workforce training for health care organizations.	3

XV. Appendix II.

AHIMA Code of Ethics

Preamble

The ethical obligations of the health information management (HIM) professional include the safeguarding of privacy and security of health information; appropriate disclosure of health information; development, use, and maintenance of health information systems and health information; and ensuring the accessibility and integrity of health information.

Healthcare consumers are increasingly concerned about security and the potential loss of privacy and the inability to control how their personal health information is used and disclosed. Core health information issues include what information should be collected, how the information should be managed, who should have access to the information, under what conditions the information should be disclosed, how the information is retained, when it is no longer needed, and how is it disposed of in a confidential manner. All of the core health information issues are addressed in compliance with state and federal regulations, and employer policies and procedures.

Ethical obligations are central to the professional's responsibility, regardless of the employment site or the method of collection, storage, and security of health information. In addition, sensitive information (e.g., genetic, adoption, substance use, sexual health, and behavioral information) requires special attention to prevent misuse. In the world of business and interactions with consumers, expertise in the protection of information is required.

Purpose of the American Health Information Management Association Code of Ethics

The HIM professional has an obligation to demonstrate actions that reflect values. The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) Code of Ethics sets forth these principles. (See also AHIMA Mission, Vision, Values) The code is relevant to all AHIMA members, non-members with the Commission on Certification for Health Informatics and Information Management (CCHIIM) certifications, and students enrolled in a formal certificate or degree granting program directly relevant to AHIMA's Purpose regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. These purposes strengthen the HIM professional's efforts to improve overall quality of healthcare.

The AHIMA Code of Ethics serves six purposes:

- Promotes high standards of HIM practice. l Summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values. l Establishes a set of ethical principles to be used to guide decision-making and actions.
- Establishes a framework for professional behavior and responsibilities when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
- Provides ethical principles by which the general public can hold the HIM professional accountable. l Mentors practitioners new to the field to HIM's mission, values, and ethical principles.

The code includes principles that are enforceable and aspirational. The extent to which each principle is enforceable is a matter of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical principles.

Principles

The following principles are based on the core values of the American Health Information Management Association and apply to all AHIMA members, non-members CCHIIM certifications, and students.

1. ***Advocate, uphold, and defend the consumer's right to privacy and the doctrine of confidentiality in the use and disclosure of information.***
2. ***Put service and the health and welfare of persons before self-interest and conduct oneself in the practice of the profession so as to bring honor to oneself, their peers, and to the health information management profession.***

3. ***Preserve, protect, and secure personal health information in any form or medium and hold in the highest regard health information and other information of a confidential nature obtained in an official capacity, taking into account the applicable statutes and regulations.***
4. ***Refuse to participate in or conceal unethical practices or procedures and report such practices.***
5. ***Use technology, data, and information resources in the way they are intended to be used.***
6. ***Advocate for appropriate uses of information resources across the healthcare ecosystem.***
7. ***Recruit and mentor students, peers and colleagues to develop and strengthen professional workforce.***
8. ***Represent the profession to the public in a positive manner.***
9. ***Advance health information management knowledge and practice through continuing education, research, publications, and presentations.***
10. ***Perform honorably health information management association responsibilities, either appointed or elected, and preserve the confidentiality of any privileged information made known in any official capacity.***
11. ***State truthfully and accurately one's credentials, professional education, and experiences.***
12. ***Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration in situations supporting ethical health information principles.***
13. ***Respect the inherent dignity and worth of every person.***

AHIMA Code of Ethics Guidelines

Violation of principles in the Code of Ethics does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law. Such a determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged violations of the code are subject to a peer review process. Such processes are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the profession to counsel and discipline its own members. Although in some situations, violations of the code would constitute unlawful conduct subject to legal process.

Guidelines for ethical and unethical behavior are provided to assist with the interpretation of the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) Code of Ethics. The terms "shall" and "shall not" are used as a basis for setting high standards for behavior. This does not imply that everyone "shall" or "shall not" do everything that is listed. This concept is true for the entire code. If someone engages in the stated activities, ethical behavior is the standard. The guidelines are not a comprehensive list. For example, the statement "safeguard all confidential consumer information to include, but not limited to, personal, health, financial, genetic and outcome information" can also be interpreted as "shall not fail to safeguard all confidential consumer information to include personal, health, financial, genetic, and outcome information."

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a code of ethics sets forth values and ethical principles to which a Health Information Management (HIM) professional can aspire and by which actions can be judged. Ethical behaviors result from a personal commitment to engage in ethical practice.

Professional responsibilities often require an individual to move beyond personal values. For example, an individual might demonstrate behaviors that are based on the values of honesty, providing service to others, or demonstrating

loyalty. In addition, professional values may require promoting confidentiality, facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration, and refusing to participate or conceal unethical practices. Professional values could require a more comprehensive set of values than an individual's need to be an ethical agent in one's own personal life.

The AHIMA Code of Ethics is to be used by AHIMA members, non-members with the Commission on Certification for Health Informatics and Information Management (CCHIIM) certifications, students enrolled in a formal certificate or degree granting program directly relevant to AHIMA's Purposes, and consumers, agencies, organizations, and bodies (such as licensing and regulatory boards, insurance providers, courts of law, government agencies, and other professional groups) that choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference. The AHIMA Code of Ethics reflects the commitment of all to uphold the profession's values and to act ethically. Individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments, must apply ethical principles.

The code does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how to act in all situations. Specific applications of the code must consider the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the values and principles.

How to Interpret the Code of Ethics

Principles and Guidelines

The following ethical principles are based on the core values of the American Health Information Management Association and apply to all AHIMA members, non-members with CCHIIM certifications, and students enrolled in a formal certificate or degree granting program directly relevant to AHIMA's Purposes. Guidelines included for each ethical principle are a non-inclusive list of behaviors and situations that can help to clarify the principle. They are not meant to be a comprehensive list of all situations that can occur.

1. ***Advocate, uphold, and defend the consumer's right to privacy and the doctrine of confidentiality in the use and disclosure of information.***

A health information management professional **shall**:

1.1. Safeguard all confidential consumer information to include, but not limited to, personal, health, financial, genetic, and outcome information.

1.2. Engage in social and political action that supports the protection of privacy and confidentiality and be aware of the impact of the political arena on the health information issues for the healthcare industry and the public.

1.3. Advocate for changes in policy and legislation to ensure protection of privacy and confidentiality, compliance, and other issues that surface as advocacy issues and facilitate informed participation by the public on these issues.

1.4. Protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service. Disclose only information that is directly relevant or necessary to achieve the purpose of disclosure. Release information only with valid authorization from a consumer or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a consumer or as authorized by federal or state regulations. The minimum necessary standard is essential when releasing health information for disclosure activities.

1.5. Promote the obligation to respect privacy by respecting confidential information shared among colleagues, while responding to requests from the legal profession, the media, or other non-healthcare related individuals, during presentations or teaching and in situations that could cause harm to persons.

1.6. Respond promptly and appropriately to consumer requests to exercise their privacy rights (e.g., access, amendments, restriction, confidential communication, etc.). Answer truthfully all consumers' questions concerning their rights to review and annotate their personal biomedical data and seek to facilitate consumers' legitimate right to exercise those rights.

2. ***Put service and the health and welfare of persons before self-interest and conduct oneself in the practice of the profession so as to bring honor to oneself, peers, and to the health information management profession.***

A health information management professional **shall**:

2.1. Act with integrity, behave in a trustworthy manner, elevate service to others above self-interest, and promote high standards of practice in every setting.

2.2. Be aware of the profession's mission, values, and ethical principles, and practice in a manner consistent with them by acting honestly and responsibly.

2.3. Anticipate, clarify, and avoid any conflict of interest, to all parties concerned, when dealing with consumers, consulting with competitors, in providing services requiring potentially conflicting roles (for example, finding out information about one facility that would help a competitor), or serving the Association in a volunteer capacity. The conflicting roles or responsibilities must be clarified and appropriate action taken to minimize any conflict of interest.

2.4. Ensure that the working environment is consistent and encourages compliance with the AHIMA Code of Ethics, taking reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in the organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the code.

2.5. Take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work one actually performs, or to which one contributed. Honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others verbally or written, such as in publication.

A health information management professional **shall not**:

2.6. Permit one's private conduct to interfere with the ability to fulfill one's professional responsibilities.

2.7. Take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further one's own personal, religious, political, or business interests.

3. ***Preserve, protect, and secure personal health information in any form or medium and hold in the highest regard health information and other information of a confidential nature obtained in an official capacity, taking into account the applicable statutes and regulations.***

A health information management professional **shall**:

3.1. Safeguard the privacy and security of written and electronic health information and other sensitive information. Take reasonable steps to ensure that health information is stored securely and that consumers' data and information is not available to others who are not authorized to have access. Prevent inappropriate disclosure of individually identifiable information.

3.2. Take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted, transferred, or disposed of in the event of termination, incapacitation, or death of a healthcare provider to other parties through the use of any media.

3.3. Inform recipients of the limitations and risks associated with providing services via electronic or social media (e.g., computer, telephone, fax, radio, and television).

4. ***Refuse to participate in or conceal unethical practices or procedures and report such practices.***

A health information management professional **shall:**

4.1. Act in a professional and ethical manner at all times.

4.2. Take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues. If needed, utilize the AHIMA Policy and Procedures for Disciplinary Review and Appeal for potential ethics complaints.

4.3. Be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues' unethical behavior. These include policies and procedures created by AHIMA, licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, supervisors, agencies, and other professional organizations.

4.4. Seek resolution if there is a belief that a colleague has acted unethically or if there is a belief of incompetence or impairment by discussing one's concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive.

4.5. Consult with a colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action when there is direct knowledge of a health information management colleague's incompetence or impairment.

4.6. Take action through appropriate formal channels, such as contacting an accreditation or regulatory body and/or the AHIMA Professional Ethics Committee if needed.

4.7. Cooperate with lawful authorities as appropriate.

A health information management professional **shall not**:

4.8. Participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud and abuse, or deception. A non-inclusive list of examples includes:

- Allowing patterns of optimizing or minimizing documentation and/or coding to impact payment l Assigning codes without provider documentation

- Coding when documentation does not justify the diagnoses or procedures that have been billed l Miscoding to avoid conflict with others

- Engaging in negligent coding practices

- Hiding or ignoring review outcomes, such as performance data
- Failing to report licensure status for a provider through the appropriate channels l Recording inaccurate data for accreditation purposes
- Allowing inappropriate access to genetic, adoption, health, or behavioral health information l Misusing sensitive information about a competitor
- Developing a "record set" that excludes meaningful consumer information to be shared with consumers to protect the health system or specific providers
- Violating the privacy of individuals

Refer to the AHIMA Standards of Ethical Coding for additional guidance.

4.9. Engage in any relationships with a consumer where there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the consumer.

5. ***Use technology, data, and information resources in the way they are intended to be used.***

A health information management professional **shall**:

5.1. Use healthcare employer technology resources within the confines of organizational policies.

5.2. Ensure all data and resulting information accessed and derived from healthcare technology resources are not used outside of the scope of the job.

A health information management professional **shall not**:

5.3. Compromise the integrity of healthcare data through any intentional acts or acts that are generally known to create risks to data integrity.

6. ***Advocate for appropriate uses of information resources across the healthcare ecosystem.***

A health information management professional **shall**:

6.1. Verify requests for data and information are based on appropriate, verifiable needs and conditions and fall within the confines of organizational policies, regulations, and laws.

6.2. Educate stakeholders about the need to maintain data integrity and the potential impacts should data integrity not be maintained.

A health information management professional **shall not**:

6.3. Manipulate information systems to produce or display data and resulting information that is intentionally misleading

7. ***Recruit and mentor students, staff, peers, and colleagues to develop and strengthen the professional workforce.***

A health information management professional **shall**:

7.1. Provide directed practice opportunities for students.

7.2. Be a mentor for students, peers, and new health information management professionals to develop and strengthen skills.

7.3. Be responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries for students, staff, peers, colleagues, and members within professional organizations.

7.4. Evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful when functioning as educators or clinical internship supervisors.

7.5. Evaluate staff's performance in a manner that is fair and respectful when functioning in a supervisory capacity.

7.6. Serve an active role in developing HIM faculty or actively recruiting HIM professionals.

A health information management professional **shall not**:

7.7. Engage in any relationships with a person (e.g., students, staff, peers, or colleagues) where there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to that other person.

8. ***Represent the profession to the public in a positive manner.***

A health information management professional **shall:**

8.1. Be an advocate for the profession in all settings and participate in activities that promote and explain the mission, values, and principles of the profession to the public.

9. ***Advance health information management knowledge and practice through continuing education, research, publications, and presentations***.

A health information management professional **shall**:

9.1. Develop and enhance continually professional expertise, knowledge, and skills (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision). Contribute to the knowledge base of health information management and share one's knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics.

9.2. Base practice decisions on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge relevant to health information management and health information management ethics.

9.3. Contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the health information management profession. These activities may include teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, advocacy, presentations in the community, and participation in professional organizations.

9.4. Engage in evaluation and research that ensures the confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them by following guidelines developed for the participants in consultation with appropriate institutional review boards.

9.5. Report evaluation and research findings accurately and take steps to correct any errors later found in published data using standard publication methods.

9.6. Design or conduct evaluation or research that is in conformance with applicable federal or state laws.

9.7. Take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development, addressing current knowledge and emerging developments related to health information management practice and ethics.

10. ***Perform honorably health information management association responsibilities, either appointed or elected, and preserve the confidentiality of any privileged information made known in any official capacity.***

A health information management professional **shall**:

10.1. Perform responsibly all duties as assigned by the professional association operating within the bylaws and policies and procedures of the association and any pertinent laws.

10.2. Uphold the decisions made by the association.

10.3. Speak on behalf of the health information management profession and association, only while serving in the role, accurately representing the official and authorized positions of the association.

10.4. Disclose any real or perceived conflicts of interest.

10.5. Relinquish association information upon ending appointed or elected responsibilities.

10.6. Resign from an association position if unable to perform the assigned responsibilities with competence.

10.7. Avoid lending the prestige of the association to advance or appear to advance the private interests of others by endorsing any product or service in return for remuneration. Avoid endorsing products or services of a third party, for-profit entity that competes with AHIMA products and services. Care should **also** be exercised in endorsing any other products and services.

11. ***State truthfully and accurately one's credentials, professional education, and experiences.***

A health information management professional **shall**:

11.1. Make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of the health information management profession, a professional health information association, or one's employer.

11.2. Claim and ensure that representation to consumers, agencies, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, training, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, and other relevant professional experience are accurate.

11.3. Claim only those relevant professional credentials actually possessed and correct any inaccuracies occurring regarding credentials.

11.4. Report only those continuing education units actually earned for the recertification cycle and correct any inaccuracies occurring regarding CEUs.

12. ***Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration in situations supporting ethical health information principles.***

A health information management professional **shall**:

12.1. Participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of consumers by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of those involved in decisions related to consumers.

12.2. Establish clearly professional and ethical obligations of the interdisciplinary team as a whole and of its individual members.

12.3. Foster trust among group members and adjusts behavior in order to establish relationships with teams.

13. ***Respect the inherent dignity and worth of every person.***

A health information management professional **shall**:

13.1. Treat each person in a respectful fashion, being mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity.

13.2. Promote the value of self-determination for each individual.

13.3. Value all kinds and classes of people equitably, deal effectively with all races, cultures, disabilities, ages and genders.

13.4. Ensure all voices are listened to and respected.

Acknowledgement

Adapted with permission from the 1999 Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers.

Resources

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