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President's Message

September/October 2004

On the Wings of Change

*Barbara Flynn, RHIA, CCS
FHIMA President*



It seems that every day there are changes in my life. In retrospect, I find that I look forward to changes whether they be in the form of a new adventure or new knowledge. Of course there are some changes that I would have just as soon not have occurred. Every change, good or bad, is a learning experience.

As I enter my second month of being President of FHIMA, I continue to be excited about the changes we can make and the opportunities that we have to improve the recognition of our profession. The changes that we can make are all dependent upon the **You!**

In the last six weeks we have distributed two e-mail blasts to the membership and received numerous responses that will allow us to educate other health care providers and government officials on the role of the HIM professional. The first e-mail blast asked for benchmarking information on the status of the Electronic Health Record in Florida health care facilities. This information is available on the Florida CoP if you would like to see the results of this survey. Jacqueline M. Jones, MA, RHIA has been appointed to the Security and Privacy subcommittee of the

Governor's Health Information Infrastructure Advisory Group. Jacquie is excited about being a part of this advisory group that will eventually formulate the structure of an electronic health record in Florida.

The second survey (e-mail blast) was sent out regarding the proposed changes to the ICD-9-CM Inpatient Coding Guidelines. The Coordination and Maintenance Committee on ICD-9-CM and AHA who publishes the "Official Coding Guidelines" is considering changing the Inpatient Coding Guidelines to include language similar to that in the Outpatient Coding Guidelines. If a change is approved, health care facilities would no longer code "possible," "probable," "questionable," or "rule-out" conditions documented on discharge. This change in the guidelines could significantly impact both case-mix index and payment to hospitals. Sonya Waters, CCS, Chair of the Data Quality Management Committee formulated the e-mail blast and summarized the results of the survey which was forwarded to AHA.

The DQM committee has also asked Marie Stangl to be the Florida Coding Roundtable Coordinator. Marie will be coordinating regional and state coding roundtables. Regional Presidents and meeting planners can contact Marie if you would like to include a coding roundtable discussion in your regional meeting. We hope to use the results of regional roundtable discussions during the coding roundtable session at the 2005 FHIMA Annual Meeting.

The 2005 FHIMA Annual Meeting planning is currently underway. The Program Committee has already lined up many interesting speakers for next year's program. The committee, chaired by Jacquie Jones, has made recommendations based in part on the results of the Annual Meeting evaluations received from the 2004 meeting participants.

It is going to be an exciting year. We have a BOD and Committee Chairpersons committed to making positive changes to keep the association and our profession moving forward. In addition, we are committed to improving relationships and communication with the Regional Associations and the membership. So, invite a FHIMA BOD member to present at your regional association meeting. Also, if you have an e-mail address and did not receive either of the e-mail blasts that were sent out, we may not have your e-mail address. You can update your Member Profile on the AHIMA website anytime.

As you know, this is also an election year. Now is the best time to talk to the candidates and educate your potential new legislators on our profession and the value of our profession to the efficient delivery of quality healthcare. Knowledge doesn't happen overnight. So even though

FHIMA will participate in a Hill Day in early 2005, we can first inform our legislators of who we are and what we do by talking to the legislators and candidates in our communities. And, second, VOTE!

I am truly looking forward to the challenges and opportunities of this year. Remember, pilots/airplanes take-off into the wind.