

June 24, 2008

To: AHIMA Board of Directors, AHIMA Executive Director,
Council on Certification, CAHIIM Commissioners, Assembly on
Education, AHIMA Leadership

Re: COC Proposal on Alternate Paths to RHIA Exam Eligibility

From: Merida L. Johns, PhD, RHIA,
AHIMA Past President

Since completing my AHIMA presidency and going off the AHIMA Board in 1998, I purposely took on a low profile with respect to AHIMA governance activities. My thinking was that new officers and new boards should be allowed to carve out their own direction and carry out their functions without a visible presence from former board officers. Therefore, I have elected to stay in the background as much as possible where governance issues are concerned.

The COC's recent recommendation on alternate paths to RHIA exam eligibility, however, is an issue that mandates that I become involved at this critical time of professional transition.

I do not support the current COC Proposal for alternate paths to the RHIA exam eligibility. Justification of my position is based by a thoughtful and thorough analysis in the response that follows. In addition a workable and reasoned alternative to the COC's proposal is presented that preserves the integrity of our credentialing process while at the same time providing an alternate approach for RHIA examination eligibility.

Executive Summary

The current COC proposal recommending that individuals without a prescribed, specialized HIM educational background sit for the RHIA examination does not present a cogent professional or business case for pursuing the course of action proposed. In advising such a dramatic departure from our current certification program, we would expect presentation of a complete business case with associated research and assessment of the consequences of such action, but this has not been provided. Consequently, this memorandum presents material, facts, and analysis to help clarify what constitutes a professional certification program, considering both historic and contemporary thinking, and offers a workable alternative to the current COC proposal.

Specifically the COC proposal is impractical for the following reasons:

- The rationale is counter-intuitive. If there is an unmet workforce demand, then credentialing individuals who already are in the workforce does nothing to increase the numbers in the workforce.

- Data on how many individuals might be affected by the alternate path are not offered. Are we talking about hundreds of individuals, thousands of individuals or tens of thousands of individuals? And given these numbers, what percentage of these would want to pursue an alternate path to the RHIA credential?
- The proposal puts forth a misleading notion that certification programs exist to meet workforce demand. Certification programs should not exist to meet workforce demands. Rather they should exist to apply professional standards, ensure competency, and protect the public
- The proposal does not address how the recommended alternate pathway meets the purpose of certification for affirming a knowledge and experience base for practitioners, employers or the public at large. For example, the COC proposal is silent on how the substance and quality of the experience qualification is to be evaluated. Thereby opening the risk of under prepared RHIA professionals in the workplace. The proposal is also silent on the resources that would be required to evaluate the experience qualification, how the evaluation would be implemented, and the cost of such evaluation.
- The proposal reflects a fundamental misinterpretation of what constitutes a certification program for entry at a professional level. Unlike an occupation or vocation, it is commonly recognized that a profession requires specialized knowledge and *often long and intensive academic preparation*. Specialized education in the domain and certification of the knowledge, are considered not only the historic cornerstones of professional entry but also reflect contemporary thinking and best practices about how a profession should be defined. *If we want to call ourselves a profession and have others consider us a profession, then we must act like a profession*. This includes not only laying claim to a domain of specialized knowledge but also requiring that an individual have the appropriate academic preparation and is certified in that knowledge before entering the profession.
- The proposal is not compatible with contemporary action by other professional groups who have had or recently implemented two-tier certification. Fifteen professions are examined in the report. *It is ironic that respected professions, like teaching and public health, are now embracing the importance of a two-tier certification program that AHIMA has had for almost eighty years. And isn't it even more ironic that at this crucial period in our professional transition that we should even consider doing away with an exemplary program that has helped to define us as a profession?*
- The proposal is a perceived “quick fix” to increase the numbers of credentialed RHIA’s in the workforce at the expense of the integrity of the credential, and does nothing to address the underlying issues related to producing and sustaining enough qualified and professional workers to meet marketplace needs. (See the

thoughtful piece compiled by the Computer Society of New Zealand that is noted in the report below and addresses similar issues).

- Essentially the proposal infers that there is no unique knowledge domain for HIM and reduces HIM to an occupation or job. What should be the highest designation of professionalism, the RHIA designation, becomes reduced in value along with the devaluation of the professional status of HIM.

How can AHIMA maintain a best practices two-tier certification process consisting of required specialized education complemented by a certification examination and at the same time help meet market place demands?

Surprisingly the framework and the opportunity already exist within the AHIMA accreditation and certification processes to accomplish this. Completion of a CAHIIM approved post-baccalaureate certificate in HIM is currently one of three eligibility options for taking the RHIA examination. However, the association has not exploited this opportunity.

The report below recommends this alternative pathway that requires no bylaws change or change to our fundamental credentialing program. Instead it only requires enhancing the framework that already exists by taking advantage of and expanding existing post-baccalaureate certificate programs offered by several existing CAHIIM approved programs.

The following benefits can be achieved by exploiting this approach:

- Preserves best practices two-tier certification process
- Maintains professionalism of the RHIA credential
- Provides avenue to increase the HIM workforce,
- Provides avenue to increase the numbers of RHIAs,
- Supports current and future CAHIIM accredited programs,
- Meets the needs of those desiring an alternate pathway to the RHIA who have HIM experience and/or other educational preparation
- Provides for rigorous evaluation of life experience and/or educational background
- Requires no bylaws or other AHIMA organizational change
- Requires no ongoing or continuing resources/cost to AHIMA or its members

The report puts forth a strong case to consider this approach to the current COC proposal for an alternate pathway to the RHIA examination. Importantly, it also provides a sound business case for an alternative solution that exploits an existing framework that provides multiple benefits to the profession, Association, accredited college programs and individuals and is achievable without any organizational change and at little or no cost.

I hope that the AHIMA Board of Directors, Council on Certification, AHIMA leaders and members move swiftly and positively in seizing this opportunity.

Background on my credentials to comment

I have both a theoretical and experiential background in professional credentialing processes that has spanned over twenty-five years. Dr. Ayres D'Costa, who was one of the foremost national experts in voluntary certification and licensure during the 1970's-1980's, was my advisor and mentor during my PhD studies. Through him I became grounded in the principles of professional certification and had the opportunity to work with him on several national professional certifications programs. In addition to my formal theoretical background in the field, I have practical experience. I served on the Council of Certification in the 1980's and after my AHIMA presidency served AHIMA in a staff position as Vice-President of Accreditation, Education, and Certification which was the division that oversaw AHIMA's certification process. Given my knowledge and background it would be professionally negligent for me not to speak out on this important issue.

Assessment of the COC Proposal

The COC proposal recommends that “individuals with a minimum of a baccalaureate degree and documented five years of full-time HIM experience be considered eligible to sit for the RHIA exam.” The recommendation supports its proposal by stating that:

“The driving force behind this recommendation is the unmet workforce demand for HIM professionals at the managerial level. Because professional certification programs exist to meet workforce demand through validation of competency, this driving force is of utmost importance to the Council on Certification. Supplementing the HIM workforce with individuals who work in the HIM domain, have demonstrated experience in the HIM field, and who consider attainment of the RHIA credential of great professional value is an additional mechanism to meet this demand.”

First, the above rationale is counter-intuitive. If there is an unmet workforce demand, then credentialing individuals who already are in the workforce does nothing to increase the numbers in the workforce. This inconsistency has been pointed out by many on the various COP forums. Furthermore, the proposal does not provide data on how many individuals might be affected by the alternate path. Are we talking about hundreds of individuals, thousands of individuals or tens of thousands of individuals? And given these numbers, what percentage of these would want to pursue an alternate path to the RHIA credential?

The rationale also puts forth a misleading notion that certification programs exist to meet workforce demand. Certification programs should not exist to meet workforce demands. Rather they should exist to apply professional standards, ensure competency, and protect the public. The National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) states that certification of “specialized skill-sets affirms a knowledge and experience base for practitioners in a particular field, their employers, and the public at large. Certification

represents a declaration of a particular individual's professional competence."
<http://www.noca.org/GeneralInformation/ValueofCertification/tabid/64/Default.aspx>

Regretfully the proposal does not address how the recommended alternate pathway meets the purpose of certification for affirming a knowledge and experience base for practitioners, employers or the public at large. For example, the COC proposal is silent on how the substance and quality of the experience qualification is to be evaluated. The proposal is also silent on the resources that would be required to evaluate the experience qualification, how the evaluation would be implemented, and the cost of such evaluation.

Just as significant the proposal is at odds with our current certification program that upholds the basic premises on which a profession is based. The proposal reflects a fundamental misinterpretation of what constitutes a certification program for entry at a professional level. Unlike an occupation or vocation, it is commonly recognized that a profession requires specialized knowledge and *often long and intensive academic preparation* (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Specialized education in the domain and certification of the knowledge, are considered not only the historic cornerstones of professional entry but also reflect contemporary thinking and best practices about how a profession should be defined. *If we want to call ourselves a profession and have others consider us a profession, then we must act like a profession.* This includes not only laying claim to a domain of specialized knowledge but also requiring that an individual have the appropriate academic preparation and is certified in that knowledge before entering the profession.

Elements of a Professional Certification Program

Frequently there is a misconception about what constitutes a professional certification program. Because of the multitude of "certifications" in the marketplace that test proficiency in a skill, it is easy to understand why this misinterpretation has developed. Professional certification is at a higher level than marketplace certifications that confer certification by passing an examination with minimal or no requirements for specialized formal educational preparation. Entry into a profession goes beyond skill preparation and skill certification.

Fortunately in 1928, the founders of the HIM profession understood the foundations of a profession. They were passionate about the need to ensure a quality workforce and were determined about being considered a profession. Early on these pioneering founders focused on developing and implementing a sound approach for entry into the profession that consisted of specialized, formal educational preparation complemented by a certification through examination of competency. The two tier approach to professional certification (specialized, formal education and certification testing) is the most common pathway for professional recognition. In fact, state licensure boards whose purpose is to protect the public and establish standards of practice for entry into practice use a two tier certification approach that includes specialized education preparation and examination. In the healthcare professions this usually includes educational preparation through

accredited or approved college programs in a specialized domain plus examination. A few examples of these licensure programs include:

- State of Oregon Physical Therapist Licensing Board
<http://www.ptboard.state.or.us/>
- New York State Education Department Office of the Professions
Physical Therapy Licensure
<http://www.op.nysed.gov/ptlic.htm#pt>
- Louisiana State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners
<http://www.laptboard.org/>
- California Board of Registered Nursing
<http://www.rn.ca.gov/applicants/lic-exam.shtml>
- Connecticut Department of Public Health – RN Licensure
http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3121&q=389430&dphNav_GID=1821

Other examples of voluntary healthcare certification programs that use a two tier certification approach include:

- Commission on Dietetic Registration
<http://www.cdrnet.org/certifications/rddtr/pathwaysrd.htm>
- National Board for Certification of Occupational Therapy
http://www.nbcot.org/webarticles/articlefiles/OTRAnnouncement_063006.pdf
- American Association of Medical Assistants
<http://www.aama-ntl.org/becomeCMA/how.aspx>
- National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (Cardiovascular Technologist)
<http://www.nbtsa.org/certifyingexam/eligibility.html>
- American Society of Cytopathology (Cytotechnologist)
<http://www.cytopathology.org/website/article.asp?id=157>
- American Society of Exercise Physiologists
<http://www.asep.org/general>
- American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics, and Pedorthics
<http://www.abcop.org/credentialing.asp>

The above are not the universe of examples, but they substantiate that the AHIMA certification program follows current and valued professional certification program processes that require ***both formal college preparation in the domain plus certification by examination.*** Furthermore, in the above examples the education required must be provided by approved programs of study, the approval of which is granted by the state or by an external accreditation body.

Besides the examples above, there are hundreds of others outside of healthcare that embrace a two tier certification program. One that is often cited is the Certified Public Accountant. This certification varies state by state, but usually requires a minimum of baccalaureate degree with a concentration in accounting or a significant number of college credits in accounting and business. Usually education must be obtained from an approved college program from CHEA, AACSB, or ACBSP.

Notable among a contemporary trend to a two-tier certification program is the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards which is the voluntary teacher certification program. With continued emphasis on provision of quality education at the elementary and secondary levels, this two-tier teacher certification program is growing in importance. (http://www.nbpts.org/userfiles/File/2008_Guide_Web_PDF_final.pdf.)

Another profession which has recently embraced a two-tier certification program is The National Board of Public Health Examiners that was established in 2005 as an independent organization to ensure that students and graduates from schools and programs of public health accredited by the Council on Education of Public Health (CEPH) have mastered the knowledge and skills relevant to contemporary public health by developing, preparing, administering and evaluating a voluntary certification exam. The Board of Public Health Examiners has stated that the two tier certification program is ***“An idea whose time has come.”*** Examinees “must without exception have a graduate level degree from a CEPH accredited program.”
<http://www.publichealthexam.org/exam.cfm>

It is ironic that respected professions, like teaching and public health, are now embracing the importance of a certification system that AHIMA has had for almost eighty years. And isn't it even more ironic that at this crucial period in our professional transition that we should even consider doing away with an exemplary program that has helped to define us as a profession?

The Building of the HIM Profession

I have conducted research consisting of extensive literature and document review from the AHIMA archives going as far back as the 1930's into the history of our profession's accreditation and certification programs. My findings were reported in the 2000 AHIMA White Paper on Education and summarized more recently in an article that I wrote in JAHIMA, September 2006 entitled *In the Winds of Change, Principles Provide a Steady Course.*

The premise of this article was that the HIM profession has weathered dramatic structural, environmental, and technological winds of change and has done so in large part because of its commitment to programs of accreditation and certification that were based on accepted and sound principles. This article is worth reading to understand how important the two-tier certification program and accreditation process have been to building the profession.

http://library.ahima.org/xpedio/groups/secure/documents/ahima/bok1_031925.hcsp?dDocName=bok1_031925

From its earliest inception the association recognized that a profession required preliminary training that was intellectual in character, involving knowledge and learning as distinguished from mere skill. In 1933 the association recognized that the existence of unqualified workers in the field lowered the standards of the profession. Hence in that year it organized a certifying board known as the Board of Registration, “so that there might be a yard-stick by which qualified medical records librarians could be determined.”

From the beginning, the profession has never wavered in its commitment to health information quality and efficiency. Dedicated to maintaining competence of its workforce and its professional designation, we have since been committed to a two-tier certification program for several decades. This grounding has been the profession’s “reason,” and has served it well, steadying its course through the changing winds of time.

The Workforce Issue and Professionalism

The COC proposal states that the driving force behind its recommendation is the unmet workforce demand for HIM professionals at the managerial level. The proposal is a perceived “quick fix” to increase the numbers of credentialed RHIA’s in the workforce at the expense of the integrity of the credential, and does nothing to address the underlying issues related to producing and sustaining enough qualified and professional workers to meet marketplace needs. Interestingly, recent AHIMA studies and reports support formal education as the key to addressing the workforce challenge and not an alternate eligibility pathway to the RHIA examination.

In 2001 AHIMA/FORE supported a major HIM workforce study. The series of reports concluded that there were insufficient numbers of certified professionals to fill the positions and roles that need HIM competencies. The results of the report identified education as being key to adapting to this changing role and concluded that technology education that improves “understanding of both architecture and application will be essential.” In support of its initiative for training the workforce, the report quotes economist Robert McTeer who states that “Instead of asking whether the US economy will create enough good jobs, we ought to be asking whether our *educational system* will produce enough qualified workers.”

http://www.ahima.org/emerging_issues/Workforce_web.pdf#page%3D1

The Executive Summary of AHIMA’s recent *Vision 2016: A Blueprint for Quality Education in Health Information Management* states that the need for HIM professionals

Response to COC Proposal on Alternate Paths to RHIA Examination Eligibility

Merida L. Johns, PhD, RHIA – June 24, 2008 (Merida@MLJohnsPhd.com)

at all levels has increased and that “these highly skilled individuals need **professional recognition** to go along with the complexity and importance of their work contribution.” The report goes on to state that “**That recognition will only come with the realization that HIM needs graduate-level academic education built on a strong undergraduate foundation and a highly skilled technical work force.**”

The scarcity of a qualified information systems workforce is a global issue. The New Zealand Computer Society has developed a thoughtful discussion paper on information system workforce needs for its own country and many of the points it makes are useful to the discussion of the COC proposal. The following excerpts discuss root causes of the workforce challenge: http://www.nzcs.org.nz/SITE_Default/x-files/79679.pdf

The NZ ICT Sector and businesses throughout NZ are facing a range of problems including a skills shortage (not enough people working in ICT in New Zealand), significant reduction in student intake into further ICT education (and reduction in the percentage graduating), negative perception of ICT as a career amongst the country’s youth, lack of retention of skilled individuals in New Zealand and significant failure rates in major projects, especially at Government level.

Until now these have been considered as separate problems, however they are actually only symptoms of a larger problem – the lack of professional recognition within the ICT industry, and the lack of marketing of ICT as a worthwhile and valuable profession.

These issues can only be addressed by a change in focus – we must transform ICT practice into a true profession. This can only be achieved via the implementation of an internationally-recognised professional certification (or “charter”) programme, much like has been done in most other professions.

As the paragraphs above note, it is critical to separate symptoms of the workforce challenge from the root causes. To meet the workforce challenge, HIM needs to be recognized as a true profession and it needs to be marketed as a worthwhile and valuable profession.

The following excerpts from the New Zealand Computer Society discussion paper, also frame what they consider to constitute professional certification:

*We believe the real issue at play is **the widespread perception that the ICT sector has not matured into a true profession.** Basically, “ICT” has an image problem. There is a clear line between a practitioner and a professional in most other professions, however (due in part to the dynamic and diverse nature of ICT) there is no perceived distinction in ICT.*

To take some examples, there is a difference between an Accounts Technician and a Professional Chartered Accountant. There is a difference between someone who

likes to develop solutions to problems and a Chartered Professional Engineer. There's a difference between someone who likes to build things and a Master Builder. There's a tangible and significant difference between one who knows about the law and someone whom has been admitted to the bar.

The examples above eloquently differentiate the “professional” from the “worker.” And if we examine the eligibility for certification examinations for the “Professional Chartered Accountant” or the “Chartered Professional Engineer” we find a two-tier certification program---required, specialized education complemented by a rigorous certification examination process and in some cases extensive work experience (i.e. five to ten years).

In summary there is no “quick-fix” to the workforce challenge. Creating alternate pathways to certification for “workers” in HIM without a required, specialized educational component will not alleviate the workforce challenge nor will it raise the professionalism of HIM. In fact it creates a risk of introducing questions about the consistent competencies of RHIA professionals.

Potential Impact on HIM Professionalism

Unlike an occupation or vocation, it is commonly recognized that a profession requires specialized knowledge and *often long and intensive academic preparation*. Allowing individuals who have a baccalaureate degree in any discipline to qualify for the RHIA certification examination negates the proposition that HIM is a profession. Essentially this proposal infers that the domain of HIM knowledge is not unique and consequently reduces HIM to an occupation or job. What should be the highest designation of professionalism, the RHIA designation, becomes reduced in value along with the devaluation of the professional status of HIM.

Open Association Membership and Credential

In 2006, the House of Delegates voted to adopt open membership to AHIMA. Essentially this action allowed any individual interested in the AHIMA purpose and willing to abide by the Code of Ethics to become an active member in good standing and be entitled to all membership privileges including the right to vote. Until that time the AHIMA Association was synonymous with the profession of HIM, because only credentialed members could be active members. Those who did not hold a credential could join the association as associate members, but were restricted in various membership privileges including the right to vote.

In reviewing the discussion forums on the COC Proposal, it appears that some may believe that open membership in the Association should evolve to opening eligibility to the profession and credential. Membership in an association is not the same as membership in an academy or college of credentialed professionals.

There are models in the professional world where membership in an association is not restricted to credentialed individuals, but entry to an associated academy is restricted to only those who hold a credential.

One example of the above model is the American Society of Civil Engineers. The Society is open to active membership for those having a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree in civil engineering or related engineering science. (Those without the requisite educational background may join as Associate members). However the Society has a separate 501c6 certification body (Civil Engineering Certification, Inc.) composed of multiple academies that certify diplomats. In the case of the academies, applicants for certification status must meet prescribed advanced educational requirements prior to sitting for the certification examination. So while there is open membership in the parent organization, the pathway to certification is not open to those who do not have the specialized educational preparation. <http://www.asce.org/professional/certification/>
http://www.aawre.org/files/pdf/CEC_08.pdf

In personal discussions with Arlan H. Rippe, P.E., F.ASCE, *President*, Civil Engineering Certification, Inc., certification beyond professional licensure is new to civil engineering. However, civil engineering like the public health profession, embraces contemporary thinking for the necessity of a two-tier certification program (specialized education plus certification examination) in order to protect the public and promote the profession.

Suggested Alternative to COC Proposal

How can AHIMA maintain a best practices two-tier certification process consisting of required specialized education complemented by a certification examination and at the same time help meet market place demands?

Surprisingly the framework and the opportunity already exist within the AHIMA accreditation and certification processes to accomplish this. However, the association has not exploited the opportunity. Below is a suggested alternative pathway that requires no bylaws change or change to our fundamental credentialing program, but instead only requires enhancing the framework that already exists.

The educational qualifications for eligibility to take the RHIA exam include:

- A.** Successfully complete the academic requirements, at the baccalaureate level, of a health information management (HIM) program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM); OR
- B.** Earn a certificate from an accredited HIM program and have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university; OR
- C.** Have graduated from a health information management program approved by a foreign association with which there is an agreement of reciprocity.

<http://www.ahima.org/certification/eligibility.rhia.asp>

The opportunity that can be exploited is “B” above; the post-baccalaureate certificate.

Several HIM CAHIIM approved four-year college programs already offer the post-baccalaureate certificate. The certificate allows those with a baccalaureate degree to complete requirements for RHIA exam eligibility without having to meet university requirements for another baccalaureate degree. Therefore, course requirements are substantially reduced.

Additionally, the certificate programs have in place systematic processes to grant credit for life experience through a “portfolio review” or challenge examination that validates that the student’s life experience is equivalent to the academic preparation. Moreover, such programs can also waive courses based on previous college work completed at an accredited academic institution.

In addition, many of the certificate programs provide a hybrid educational experience, providing courses online as well as onsite. The hybrid experience is attractive to those who are already in the workforce and who cannot leave full-time employment to relocate to continue their advanced education.

Exploiting the certificate opportunity is a sound business case for meeting workforce needs, providing the following benefits:

- Preserves best practices two-tier certification process
- Maintains professionalism of the RHIA credential
- Provides avenue to increase the HIM workforce,
- Provides avenue to increase the numbers of RHIAs,
- Supports current and future CAHIIM accredited programs,
- Meet the needs of those desiring an alternate pathway to the RHIA who have HIM experience or other educational preparation
- Provides for rigorous evaluation of life experience and/or educational background
- ***Requires no bylaws, eligibility or organizational change***
- Requires no additional ongoing or continuing resources/cost to AHIMA or its members

Seizing the opportunity

How can AHIMA best seize and exploit this opportunity? The following steps can be quickly and easily implemented:

Immediate Action:

- Identify the current CAHIIM accredited programs that offer the certificate program
- Determine the market for the certificate program and RHIA alternative pathway (solid data not anecdotal information)
- Convene a focus group of identified certificate programs to identify how the programs can best meet market demand.
- Identify specific benchmarks to be achieved (i.e., number of individuals enrolling, completing programs, growth in numbers of certificate programs, increase in AHIMA membership, etc.)
- Launch an aggressive marketing campaign to promote the certificate programs to AHIMA members and others

Intermediate Action (Completed in 1-3 years)

- Provide seed money through FORE to current CAHIIM accredited academic programs to help them establish additional models of post baccalaureate certificate programs and/or to help current post-baccalaureate certificate programs design and/or implement best practices for portfolio review and hybrid delivery methods
- Establish scholarship funds through FORE specifically targeted to this market
- Develop a collaborative network of post-baccalaureate programs whose charge is to develop creative delivery platforms and/or cooperative arrangements to support post-baccalaureate certificate programs. This could be done through AOE.

Continuing Action (3 years and beyond)

- Assess benchmarks and evaluate strengths and weaknesses of certificate models
- Determine effectiveness of the alternative pathway in:
 - Preserving best practices two-tier certification process
 - Increasing the HIM workforce,
 - Increasing the numbers of RHIA's,
 - Increasing AHIMA membership
 - Supporting CAHIIM accredited programs,
 - Meeting the needs of those desiring an alternate pathway to the RHIA
 - Evaluate return on investment (ROI)

Conclusion

The rationale above puts forth a strong case for considering an alternate approach to the current COC proposal. Importantly, it provides a sound business case for an alternative solution that exploits an existing framework providing multiple benefits for no additional cost that are achievable without any bylaws, eligibility or organizational change.

I hope that the AHIMA Board of Directors, Council on Certification, AHIMA leaders and members move swiftly and positively in seizing this opportunity.