

## What Is Health Information?

**Health Information Management (HIM)** is the practice of acquiring, analyzing, and protecting digital and traditional medical information vital to providing quality patient care. HIM professionals are highly trained in the latest information management technology applications and understand the workflow in any healthcare provider organization from large hospital systems to the private physician practice. They are vital to the daily operations management of health information and electronic health records.

Health information management professionals work in a variety of different settings and job titles. They often serve in bridge roles, connecting clinical, operational, and administrative functions. These professionals affect the quality of patient information and patient care at every touch point in the healthcare delivery cycle. Having skilled HIM professionals on staff ensures an organization has the right information on hand when and where it is needed while maintaining the highest standards of data integrity, confidentiality, and security.

## Why Choose a Career in Health Information?

### Versatile Education

By studying health information, students will acquire a versatile yet focused skill set incorporating clinical, information technology, leadership, and management skills. Health information professionals use their knowledge of information technology and records management to form the link between clinicians, administrators, technology designers, and information technology professionals.

### Dynamic Career Opportunities

Constantly evolving regulations and technologies allow for lifelong learning and continued professional development. As healthcare advances, health information provides the patient data needed to successfully navigate the changes. As a result, health information professionals can expect to be in high demand as the health sector continues to expand. Demand is on the rise at all levels of education and credentialing. There are approximately 12,000 to 50,000 new jobs anticipated by 2017, and the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) cites medical records and health information technicians as one of the 20 fastest growing occupations in the US.

On top of strong job prospects, competitive salaries also await graduates. More than half of new health information graduates with bachelor's degrees start with salaries in the \$40,000 to \$60,000 range. By five years out, one can earn upwards of \$70,000 to \$105,000 annually. Most new health information graduates with associate's degrees jump right in and earn \$20,000 to \$30,000 annually. These figures are just averages—many professionals report higher salaries.

Industries with an increased demand for health information professionals include academic institutions, consulting agencies, government agencies, and healthcare software companies. As health information technology (HIT) becomes more prevalent, health information practitioners will continue to be critical components of the electronic health record (EHR) workforce. According to the US Department of Labor, HIT will grow to encompass new support positions, including mobile support adoption positions, public health informatics, implementation support specialists, and information management redesign specialists.

**A career in HIM is right for you if you:**

- \*See yourself in a career that offers diverse opportunities.
- \*Would like to work in health care, but not directly with patients.
- \*Have an aptitude for science, but also like management, law, and computers.
- \*Enjoy working with professionals: physicians, nurses, lawyers, administrators and executives.
- \*Want a career where you can choose to work on your own, with others, or some of both.

HIM programs incorporate the disciplines of medicine, management, finance, information technology, and law into one curriculum. Because of this unique mixture, HIM graduates can choose from a variety of work settings across an array of healthcare environments.

Quick Facts: Health Information Management	
<a href="#">2012 Median Pay</a>	\$88,580 per year \$42.59 per hour
<a href="#">Entry-Level Education</a>	Bachelor's degree
<a href="#">Work Experience in a Related Occupation</a>	None
<a href="#">On-the-job Training</a>	None
<a href="#">Number of Jobs, 2012</a>	315,500
<a href="#">Job Outlook, 2012-22</a>	23% (Much faster than average)
<a href="#">Employment Change, 2012-22</a>	73,300

**Pay**

The median annual wage for medical and health services managers was \$88,580 in May 2012. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$53,940, and the top 10 percent earned more than \$150,560.

Earnings of medical and health services managers vary by type and size of the facility and by level of responsibility. For example, the [Medical Group Management Association](#) reported that, in 2012, median compensation for administrators was \$87,862 in practices with 6 or fewer physicians; \$126,478 in practices with 7 to 25 physicians; and \$148,604 in practices with 26 or more physicians.

Most medical and health services managers work full time. Because their services are sometimes needed in emergencies or at facilities that are always open, some work may be required during evenings, on weekends, or overnight.

### **Potential Places/Types of Employment:**

Although employment growth in hospitals will not keep pace with growth in other health care industries, many new jobs are expected in physician offices, as a result of increasing demand for detailed records. Rapid growth also is expected in home health care services, outpatient care centers and nursing and residential care facilities

Hospital-Acute Care, Rehabilitation, Long Term Acute Care, Critical Access

Behavioral Health

Physician Offices

Correctional Facilities

Insurance Companies

Quality and/or Risk Opportunities

Information Science and Technology Opportunities

Public Health Departments-Supervise data collections from health care institutions & assist in Research

Research Firms

Consultants/Auditors

Home Office Opportunities

Coding Opportunities

Revenue Cycle Opportunities

### **References and Helpful Websites:**

<http://hicareers.com/CareerMap/>

[http://library.ahima.org/xpedio/groups/public/documents/ahima/bok1\\_050303.pdf](http://library.ahima.org/xpedio/groups/public/documents/ahima/bok1_050303.pdf)

<http://www.ahima.org/careers>

American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) [www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org)

National Cancer Registrars Association (NCRA) [www.ncra-usa.org](http://www.ncra-usa.org)

### **Program Requirements:**

- **2.5 GPA**
- **BMS 250 and 251 C or better (BMS 208, 290, 291 will substitute)**
- **AHS 100 C or better**