

Highlights from the 2010 **CORPORATE INDUSTRY BRIEFING**

*Presented by AHIMA and the AHIMA
Foundation*



*Pictured (l to r): Alan Dowling, Mary Madison,
Rep. David Wu, Rita Bowen, Rob Healy*

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In the midst of the historic signing of the Health Reform legislation, executives from over 30 companies gathered at the 7th annual Corporate Industry Briefing in Washington DC. This annual event, presented by AHIMA and the AHIMA Foundation and sponsored this year by DeVry University, provides an exclusive forum for dynamic information exchange on important industry developments between invited corporate executives and health industry experts in the public and private sector. It also affords an opportunity for corporate sponsors and donors of AHIMA and the AHIMA Foundation to network with colleagues, and provide input into solutions and outstanding issues challenging health information and the health industry at large. Topics this year ranged from translating research into practice, meaningful use, health workforce, privacy and security issues, to implications of ARRA and HITECH. Speakers included: U.S. Representative **David Wu** (D-OR); **Susan Dentzer**, Editor-in-Chief of *Health Affairs*; **David Hunt**, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology; and senior leadership from AHIMA and its Foundation. The audience brought varying perspectives from their industry sectors and organizations, which stimulated dialogue about emerging health reform changes and industry challenges in electronic health record adoption, implementation and related workforce implications and issues.

Now is the time to capitalize on the momentum – U.S. Representative David Wu (D-OR)

U.S. Representative David Wu provided the federal legislative perspective on Health Information Technology (HIT) and workforce implications for the industry. He noted that we are faced with an historic opportunity, in that Congress and the President are recognizing the importance of HIT and committing billions of dollars to advance the issue. He sees the major challenge as being able to achieve and realize the benefits across the board of effective HIT implementation. Congressman Wu noted three barriers to the adoption of HIT: 1) need for appropriate technology and interoperability standards which would promote physicians' confidence in purchasing HIT; 2) misalignment of costs and benefits of HIT adoption, i.e., providers are purchasing the HIT systems while payors experience the financial gains; and 3) lack of well-trained workforce professionals, i.e., a workforce that requires professionals with expertise in both IT and healthcare. Congressman Wu has introduced legislation to advance the use of electronic records across health systems, which would train 10,000 health care information technology professionals by 2011 to create a workforce capable of innovating, implementing, and using electronic health systems effectively.

Avoiding "Implemegeddon" – Susan Dentzer, *HealthAffairs*, First "Thought Leader" Lecturer

Susan Dentzer, Editor-in-Chief of *Health Affairs*, gave the inaugural lecture of the AHIMA Foundation's new "Thought Leader" lecture series, supported through the AHIMA Foundation's *Transforming Health Information* campaign. In her opening remarks, Ms. Dentzer perceived the healthcare industry as embarking on a massive change process, with a critical need to move research findings into implementation, best practice and solutions as quickly as possible. This calls for a more rapid-cycle learning process, adapting the "do-change-learn" model. Ms. Dentzer noted five key challenges facing this process: 1) The HIT learning challenge: evidence to date on how much we've been able to improve the quality of health care through HIT is sketchy at best, so it is important to distribute research and case study findings quickly so that we can learn from them on a real-time basis. 2) The "what works" challenge of comparative effectiveness research: while extremely important, this type of research is typically difficult and expensive to implement; however, by using more observational studies and getting early signals through the use of health data and electronic health records, it may be possible to conduct comparative effectiveness research much more rapidly. 3) The delivery system reform challenge: as a

large number of people will be entering the system through universal coverage reform, changes need to be made to make healthcare delivery more effective and efficient – moving away from the visit-based model toward more of a team-based model, which would require strong HIT underpinnings. 4) The “bending the cost curve” challenge: healthcare spending is growing at a rate that is unsustainable, so creative approaches and models demonstrating value-based spending are needed (e.g., applying case studies to determine what works, such as the Massachusetts model of implementing universal health coverage). 5) The “improving America’s health” challenge: the growing disparities in health and life expectancy across the US require systematic changes in both the healthcare delivery model and social norms, using research findings towards achieving a healthier US population in conjunction with evidence-based health care delivery and spending. It was noted that the April 2010 *Health Affairs* issue will include a theme on meaningful use. Ms. Dentzer’s presentation was made possible through philanthropic contributions from HealthPort and Precyse Solutions and will be made available to the public on the AHIMA Foundation’s website over the next six months.

Transition requires a system, resources, and courage – David Hunt, MD, Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology

David Hunt, MD, Chief Medical Officer of the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), spoke on meaningful use and the health information workforce. Provisions in the HITECH Act mandate that ONC define meaningful use, support attainment of meaningful use, establish public trust, and foster HIT innovation. Meaningful use of electronic health records (EHRs), which will be driven through Medicare & Medicaid incentives and penalties, will lead to improved individual and population health outcomes, increased transparency and efficiency, and an improved ability to study and improve care delivery. Dr. Hunt stated that meaningful use is an opportunity to improve quality and safety at a systems level; by implementing this, ONC can effect an improvement to the overall value and services of healthcare. He asserted that meaningful change must be led by clinicians; the goal isn’t only to have the right hardware or software, but to apply HIT properly so that physicians can learn new information about their patients and provide better care. Dr. Hunt noted that among the six major barriers to EHR adoption, three are financially-related. In its effort to encourage EHR adoption, ONC is funding regional extension centers created to disseminate best practices and assist in EHR implementation in small physician practices. With respect to workforce training, ONC is involved in funding curriculum and competency exam development, and university-based training programs in urban and rural areas. Another important area where meaningful use is being introduced is in state level health information exchanges. ONC is developing these exchanges through state grants, frameworks for privacy and security, and frameworks for standards and certification. Dr. Hunt noted that the final rule on meaningful use will be published by ONC later this spring.

Preparing for the future in health information management – AHIMA and the AHIMA Foundation

Taking into account the views of speakers and corporate attendees, executives from AHIMA and the AHIMA Foundation presented current initiatives and ongoing leadership efforts in health information and the health industry at large. Dan Rode, Vice President of Policy and Government Relations at AHIMA, and Sandy Fuller, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of AHIMA, provided the progress and perspectives on the ICD-10/5010 coding system transition and industry readiness. AHIMA’s goals include leading the industry in ICD-10 training and enabling successful implementation. Dan Rode and Don Mon, AHIMA’s Vice President of Practice Leadership, shared some of AHIMA’s 2010 strategies and related efforts. Strategic areas are focused on EHR adoption, health information exchange, confidentiality, privacy and security, ICD-10, and clinical data and documentation integrity. These efforts are intended to position AHIMA as a strong, visible industry leader in shaping thinking along the dimensions of policy, legislation, HIT standards, and implementation. AHIMA will also lead the effort to advance health information priorities through advocacy, participation in key industry initiatives, and alliance activities.

Alan F. Dowling, PhD, Chief Executive Officer, AHIMA, provided an overview of the strategic priorities being pursued by both AHIMA and the Foundation. He described these in terms of a core model, which encompasses AHIMA’s strategic position as the central professional association focused on the holistic management of health information. The AHIMA Foundation allows AHIMA to be able to adopt and evaluate best field and educational practices through research. Mary Madison, executive director of the AHIMA Foundation, mentioned select national research collaborations with AHRQ and the RAND Corporation focused on health information technology in rural areas, student merit scholarships made available through the Foundation, and other executive leadership development programs that have been supported through corporate philanthropic contributions.

In closing remarks, Leslie Fox, Chief Executive Officer of Care Communications, Inc. and co-Chair for the AHIMA Foundation Campaign *Transforming Health Information*, encouraged attendees to get as involved as possible in supporting efforts to move AHIMA and its Foundation forward in the health information industry.

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