

HIM-Interchange

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Letter from the Editor

Joanne Fitzgerald



Dear *HIM-Interchange* readers

Welcome to the first issue of 2019. This issue was put together soon after the 2018 Health Information Management Association of Australia (HIMAA)/ National Centre for Classification in Health (NCCH) Conference, which was held in Hobart from 31 October to 2 November 2018. The conference theme was 'Health Information Management: Engaging the Next Generation' and the presentations and conversations certainly inspired us for this issue of *HIM-Interchange*.

One of the engagement strategies HIMAA has developed over the last few years is Health Information Management Awareness Week (HIM Awareness Week), which aims to celebrate and honour all health information professionals and to raise awareness of their knowledge and skills. Jenny Gilder and Carol Loggie (2019) go into the history of HIM Awareness Week and contributors provide some examples of events and activities that they have used to celebrate and promote HIM Awareness Week. HIM Awareness Week this year is even more momentous as it is HIMAA's 70th anniversary year. I hope the article inspires you to get creative in your organisation and raise the profile of the profession and the contribution we make.

We have personal perspectives from two of the next generation of Health Information Managers (HIMs) on their experience with professional practice placements. Kevin Banh (2019) describes the four weeks he spent at the Victorian Agency for Health Information and shares his view on the value of professional practice placements. Brett Droder's (2019) experience as an intern at a German health consulting and technology company will inspire a little envy among those of us

whose professional practice placements were at the local hospital. The skills developed by Brett through his internship, including gaining understanding of an electronic health record system, engaging with clinicians on the use and design of digital health systems and development of a business case and implementation plan, are a high priority requirement for the next generation, and the current generation of HIMs.

Fortunately health information management students do not necessarily need to travel overseas to see electronic health record systems in action. With the continued roll out of electronic health records in Australian hospitals, many health information management students will be working with electronic records during their professional practice placement at the local hospital. Are electronic health records now the norm? Phyllis Watson (2019) shares her insights on the current status of electronic health record roll out in Australia that she gained from the 2018 HIMAA/NCCH Conference. As you will read in Phyllis' article, she believes we still have some way to go. What do you think? What impact does this have on engaging the next generation, who have grown up in the digital world, to become HIMs?

In this issue you will find the final instalment in the series of articles on Clinical Coder (CC) education prepared by Deborah Yagmich and Jennie Shephard (2019), based on information provided by CCs in a national questionnaire carried out in 2018. In the final article, Deb and Jennie outline the clinical coding education wish list as described by CCs. Most of the CCs who responded to the questionnaire were in agreement that there needed to be a variety of methods and approaches for clinical coding education as every person had different learning needs and styles. There was also a strong focus on the importance of the clinical coding educator's role and the need for skilled clinical coding educators to design, implement and evaluate clinical coding education programs.

Continuing on the survey theme, many of you who attended the HIMAA/NCCH Conference likely participated in the workshop on 2 November 2018 where preliminary results of a national survey that examined clinical coding practices in Australia were presented. Strategies and resources to support CC confidence and good clinical coding practice

were discussed by delegates. In this issue, Vera Dimitropoulos et al (2019) provide a follow up to the workshop and present further findings from the survey with the aim of understanding the pressures associated with clinical coding in Australian hospitals.

Lastly, I am very pleased we have had some correspondence from a couple of readers who have been prompted to email us after reading some recent articles. If an article resonates with you, or perhaps you have a different view point to what has been presented, please get in touch with us.

Enjoy the issue.

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