Section I: Overview of House of Delegates

Welcome Letter to Delegates

Greetings, AHIMA Delegate:

Congratulations on your recent appointment to the AHIMA House of Delegates (HoD; House). Founded in 1946, you are a part of a long-standing, decision-making body of our professional association. As a delegate, you have an important role in guiding and governing the health information management (HIM) profession and are assuming a critical role for AHIMA and your Component State Association (CSA).

Almost a decade ago, the HoD started conducting business both online and face-to-face to meet the demands of a fast-paced healthcare industry. Delegates dialogue, deliberate and act for the betterment of the membership and the profession at an accelerated pace. The most important responsibility of delegates is to develop, discuss, and/or vote on important issues for professional growth, development and viability of the HIM profession. This document will explore the process for HoD governance and the importance of CSA membership communication.

We encourage you to review this handbook as it provides important information that will orient you to the HoD and help ensure your success in serving as a delegate. You will find helpful reference documents, a position description, a list of terms and definitions and an overview of the House of Delegates and more.

We wish you great success in your role and we thank you for your time and commitment to the HIM profession. We take great pride in our member’s satisfaction and work hard to ensure the “member is #1”. Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance to you and your CSA. We look forward to working with you this year!

Best Regards,

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Section I: Overview of House of Delegates

**House of Delegates Governance**

“The board governs the association, house governs the profession”

**History**
In 2007, the House of Delegates implemented a structure comprised of six standing house teams representing individual facets of health information management. This structure allowed for more tactical work, engagement, and valuable contributions. Team charges were set by the AHIMA Board of Directors and accomplished over time.

During the 2011 annual HoD business meeting, delegates revised the bylaws and experienced a new way of thinking and working. Facilitated by Glenn Tecker from Tecker International LLC, delegates discussed, collaborated, and recommended action on 11 mega issues facing our profession. The work on the mega issues is being accomplished through a variety of groups. At Winter Team Talks, Susan Parker, 2012 Speaker of the House, presented a new, forward-thinking approach to the operations and configuration of the House of Delegates, also referred to as the Governing the Profession Initiative.

**Today**
Based on the input and comments received at the 2012 Leadership Symposium, there was consensus to move forward with the proposed structure. The new approach will position the House of Delegates to move more agilely to address the issues facing our profession today, tomorrow, and in the future. The operational framework will allow the HoD to make the best use of time and effort.

Below are descriptions of House Leadership, Envisioning Collaborative, and task forces that help bring more clarity to the new House structure.

**House Leadership**
House Leadership will include all 52 CSAs providing oversight to the designated task forces. Additionally, it will carry some of the same responsibilities as the former House Operations House Team. Similar to task forces, the house leadership will divide and conquer specific initiatives with respect to the House of Delegates. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, planning the annual meeting, developing procedural guidelines, and monitoring performance measures.

**The Envisioning Collaborative**
The Envisioning Collaborative will serve as a “think tank” comprised of delegates, subject matter experts, and industry leaders bringing forward emerging issues and trends that can impact our profession. In this environment, there needs to be a robust exchange of perspectives, innovation, and ideas that will enable us to make sound decisions to help generate strategic solutions advancing the profession.

**Task Forces**
In replacement of the six standing house teams, the formation of task forces will create a member focused objective linked to AHIMA strategy that includes a defined set of issues. This will allow for more flexibility and agility in the completion of projects. Members may volunteer for task forces that best fit their interests, expertise, and time commitment.
Section I: Overview of House of Delegates

Role, Training and Leadership

Role of the Delegate
Delegates work virtually, year-round advocating for the profession, the members, and the Association. With a special focus on governing the profession, role activities will consist of participating in debate and discussion, conducting environmental scanning, advocating for the profession, and vetting professional practice content. Delegates are elected by respective state members and serve as a vital communication and membership link between AHIMA and its members. These leaders help keep our profession strong and moving forward by contributing or recommending action on issues affecting the industry and ensuring the voice of the member is heard.

Role of the AHIMA Board of Directors in the House of Delegates
Members of the AHIMA Board of Directors participate in the AHIMA House of Delegates as delegates. The Board’s primary responsibility is governing the association with fiduciary oversight for AHIMA. The Board is not representing his/her home CSA when serving in the HoD as a Board member. He or she, is elected by the AHIMA membership, and is acting on behalf of the entire AHIMA membership whereas the HoD is acting on behalf on their CSA members. The Board’s participation is important in ensuring the HoD, as a unit with AHIMA, is working in a coordinated effort with the association and in alignment with the AHIMA strategy.

Role of the Alternate Delegate
Members of the AHIMA House of Delegates serve as the primary link between AHIMA and its members. The delegate is a key source of information on activities, programs, and policies of AHIMA. Therefore, when the delegate is unable to fulfill his/her responsibilities, an alternate delegate should resume those responsibilities in the delegate’s absence. The qualifications and responsibilities of the alternate delegate are the same as identified for the delegate.

Training
There are many training and professional development opportunities that you have access to as a delegate. As an added bonus, many of these provide continuing education units. Some of the key training opportunities are Leadership Symposium (July), Delegate Training Webinar (August), Advocacy and Leadership Symposium (March), annual House of Delegates business meeting (September/October). Please be sure to watch the State Leaders and House of Delegates Community for exact dates and more information about these events.

Future Leadership at AHIMA
As you progress in your role as a delegate, be sure to consider serving in future leadership roles with AHIMA or locally within your own CSA. You can complete the online Application to Serve and learn more about AHIMA’s elected and appointed leadership roles at AHIMA.

For more information about leadership development, please visit Careers in HIM/Leadership Development.
Section I: Overview of House of Delegates

**DELEGATE JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Volunteer Core Competencies**
AHIMA has identified core competencies for all volunteers, including delegates. All volunteer leaders are encouraged to complete the [Volunteer Leadership Competencies Self-Assessment](#). It is a useful tool for professional development and when considering volunteering for leadership positions.

**Qualifications** *(at a minimum)*
- Active member of AHIMA and CSA
- Knowledgeable and experienced HIM professional
- Demonstrates leadership and promotes advocacy
- Accessible to communicate via phone or email
- Available and active when needed

**Desired Attributes**
- Understanding of AHIMA, the profession, and the industry
- Possesses critical and strategic thinking skills
- Communicates with and engages members
- Presents a professional image and has high ethical standards

The role of delegate is to govern the HIM profession. This is done by performing the following activities:
- Advocates for the profession, the members, and the Association
- Communicates and provides feedback on issues
- As outlined in the Bylaws:
  - Approves the standards governing the profession
  - Elects the members of the AHIMA Nominating Committee, except the Chairman and appointed members
- Vets professional practice content
- Conducts environmental scanning
- Serves as a communication and membership link between AHIMA and its members
- Contributes or recommends action on issues affecting the HIM profession
- Facilitates the voice of the member
- Votes on important matters pertaining to the House of Delegates
- Seeks feedback and informs the membership on AHIMA and HoD activities
- Provides input on gaps in AHIMA programs and services and areas of HIM research and innovation
- Participates in meetings:
  - CSA and/or local meetings and Board meetings
  - March Advocacy & Leadership Symposium
  - July Leadership Symposium
  - Annual House of Delegates Meeting
Section II: About AHIMA

VISION, MISSION, AND CORE VALUES

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is the premier association of health information management (HIM) professionals. Serving 52 affiliated component state associations and more than 64,000 members, it is recognized as the leading source of “HIM knowledge,” a respected authority for rigorous professional certification, and one of the industry’s most active and influential advocates in Congress.

Founded in 1928 to improve health record quality, AHIMA has played a leadership role in the effective management of health data and medical records needed to deliver quality healthcare to the public. AHIMA is committed to advancing the HIM profession in an increasingly electronic and global environment through leadership in advocacy, education, certification, and lifelong learning. We are working to advance the implementation of electronic health records (EHRs) by leading key industry initiatives and advocating high standards. We strive to keep our members one step ahead through accreditation of cutting-edge academic programs and professional development opportunities, including comprehensive continuing education.

Quality information is essential to all aspects of today’s healthcare system. HIM is the body of knowledge and practice that ensures the availability of health information to facilitate real-time healthcare delivery and critical health-related decision making for multiple purposes across diverse organizations, settings, and disciplines. AHIMA’s members are dedicated to the effective management of personal health information required to deliver quality healthcare to the public.

Vision:
AHIMA...leading the advancement and ethical use of quality health information to promote health and wellness worldwide.

Mission:
AHIMA leads the health informatics and information management community to advance professional practice and standards

Core Values:

Quality:
Demonstrated by an abiding commitment to innovation, relevance and value in programs, products and services

Respect:
Demonstrated by appreciation of the value of differing perspectives; enjoyable experiences; courteous interaction; and celebration of achievements that advance our common cause

Integrity:
Demonstrated by openness in decision-making, honesty in communication and activity, and ethical practices that earn trust and support collaboration

Leadership:
Demonstrated by visionary thinking; decisions responsive to membership and mission; and accountability for actions and outcomes
AHIMA has developed a set of initiatives built around AIM FREE, seven strategic initiatives that will align the Association to meet its goals now and in the future.

A = Agility
Be agile and responsive to the needs of our constituencies and market.

I = Image
Advance the image of the Association and its members with effective branding, communications, and recognition.

M = Member is #1
Promote an environment where the Member is #1.

F = Finance
Remain fiscally viable to support our mission and vision.

R = Research
Create a center for innovative research that supports our members, market, and profession.

E = Education
Encourage growth within our profession by enhancing educational programming that appeals to first and second career individuals and our current professionals.

E = Employee Engagement
Be an environment that encourages team building, cross-functional communication, and employee engagement.
Section III: Resources

**READING LIST**

The Reading List includes key resources for you to review. After you have reviewed each item, place a check in the “Read” column. If you are unable to access a document, contact Volunteer.Services@ahima.org for assistance. For some links to work correctly, you need to login to the State Leaders and House of Delegates Community (SLHOD Community).

For general information about the House of Delegates, including upcoming events and activities, please visit the HoD website at [http://www.ahima.org/about/hod.aspx](http://www.ahima.org/about/hod.aspx).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Name</th>
<th>Overview</th>
<th>Read</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AHIMA Bylaws</td>
<td>Copy of AHIMA’s Bylaws</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHIMA Code of Ethics</td>
<td>Helpful review of the principles and guidelines of the Code of Ethics by which members and credentialed HIM professionals must abide. This document describes our professional responsibility, noting what behaviors are “ethical.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>AHIMA Publications</td>
<td>As a member of AHIMA, you receive publications both electronically and in print. Take a moment to verify your AHIMA Profile is current so you receive these publications in a timely manner and at your preferred location. As a delegate, it is important you stay current with what’s happening in the industry. These AHIMA publications will help you stay current and keep an eye on the big picture as you consider AHIMA business.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I-Lead Newsletter</td>
<td>Newsletter for CSA leaders and delegates that provides timely updates on the latest and anticipated activity in the SLHOD Community. Note: Link will take you to the Community Login page. After logging in, you will be directed to the topic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>House of Delegates Policies and Procedures</td>
<td>Defines the objectives, election of delegates, delegate certification, preparation of delegates and voting process of the House of Delegates. Note: Link will take you to the Community Login page. After logging in, you will be directed to the topic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposed Bylaw Amendment Form</td>
<td>Guides the formatting of any proposed bylaw changes into three sections: the current bylaw; the proposed amendment; and the rationale behind the proposal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>House of Delegates Apportionment Report</td>
<td>Provides information about CSA apportionment and information for new delegates. An updated reported is issued to CSAs in approximately late January/early February of each year. Note: Link will take you to the Community Login page. After logging in, you will be directed to the topic.</td>
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Section III: Resources

CSA Communication

State Leaders and House of Delegates Community in the CoP (SLHOD Community)
The State Leaders and House of Delegates Community is one of your most vital resources. It is the community for the House of Delegates and CSA Leaders. If you haven’t already joined this CoP, take a few minutes to do so now.

The SLHOD Community is the place where you can find the following information: meeting announcements, information about action items and voting, training, discussion amongst delegates, CSA leaders and members, etc. There is a wealth of information here. Be sure to take some time to explore this Community and plan to visit it at least \textbf{weekly} for new information.

Find more information on navigating the CoP by clicking here.

Accessing CSA Resources
As you review this handbook, keep in mind that your CSA may have additional resources, policies and procedures or training materials to help you understand your role. It’s likely your CSA has specific expectations of you – you will want to find out about these early. Consider partnering with an experienced delegate in your CSA or someone who has recently served in the role of a delegate. A “delegate buddy” can be very helpful.

CSAs Supporting Delegates
CSAs need to support delegates in their important role. CSA members should be aware of issues and take the responsibility to provide input and feedback to their delegates on issues. As well, CSAs need to ensure delegates fully understand their role. CSAs should have policies, procedures and a position description available to delegates. Providing new delegates a sample process of obtaining member input can help ensure delegates have the tools to be successful. Some CSAs may actively use their Geographic CoP while others make best use of e-blasts or a Web site, and still others prefer the face-to-face meeting format. It’s helpful for new delegates to understand what process works best so she/he can easily obtain member input.

While CSAs need to support delegates, delegates have a responsibility to fulfill expectations and carry out required duties. A key role of the delegate is to communicate with members on important issues. This includes educating members on issues and engaging in thoughtful dialogue on both sides of an issue.
Section III: Resources

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Below is a list of commonly used terms and their definitions along with common acronyms. Take a moment and become familiar with each term and acronym.

- **AHIMA** – American Health Information Management Association

- **Action Item** – Item that requires a vote by the House of Delegates. Examples of action items include the annual Nominating Committee election, motions, amendments to the AHIMA Bylaws, or motions to adopt resolutions.

- **Apportionment** – Distribution of delegates per component state association. Apportionment for all CSAs is calculated annually by AHIMA staff in accordance with the AHIMA Bylaws. The annual calculation of apportionment may result in a slight change in the size of the House of Delegates each year.

- **Community of Practice (CoP or Community)** – Refers to AHIMA’s members-only, online collaboration and networking tool.

- **Component State Association (CSA)** – The AHIMA federation is made up of 52 CSAs – including the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

- **CSA Survey** – Electronic survey completed annually from approximately April – June by each CSA. It collects information and statistics about each CSA. The information is used for reporting and benchmarking purposes.

- **Delegate** – Individuals elected by a CSA or appointed by a CSA Board of Directors to serve in the AHIMA House of Delegates, a grassroots member forum, to advance the health information management profession. The directors serving on the AHIMA Board of Directors are delegates in the House of Delegates and represent all members of AHIMA in their actions.

- **Delegate Term** – Delegates typically serve in the House of Delegates for two years, but this varies by CSA. Delegates can locate their specific term length by contacting their CSA leaders and in their CSA bylaws or policies and procedures.

- **Environmental Scan** – Process to collect input from CSAs and subject matter experts on trends, priorities or other emerging factors that are influencing or have the potential to significantly impact the health information management profession.

- **Envisioning Collaborative** - The Envisioning Collaborative will serve as a “think tank” comprised of delegates, subject matter experts, and industry leaders bringing forward a robust exchange of perspectives, innovation, and ideas that
will enable us to make sound decisions toward strategic solutions that advance the profession.

- **House of Delegates (HoD; House)** – A grassroots member forum to advance the health information management profession. The purpose of the House of Delegates is to conduct the official business of AHIMA, with specific powers and duties outlined in the AHIMA Bylaws. The HoD conducts business on a virtual, year-round basis with an annual business meeting being held in conjunction with the Annual Convention and Exhibits (typically late September/early October). Information about the House of Delegates is on the AHIMA Web site at [http://www.ahima.org/about/hod.aspx](http://www.ahima.org/about/hod.aspx).

- **House of Delegates Calendar** – The House of Delegates operates on a July 1 – June 30 calendar. Approximately 50% of the House membership turns over each year. The AHIMA Board of Directors follow a January 1 – December 31 calendar.

- **House Leadership** – House Leadership, consisting of 52 CSA delegates, will serve as a steering committee. They will provide oversight to the designated task forces and carry some of the same responsibilities as the former House Operations House Team. Similar to task forces, the leadership team will divide and conquer specific initiatives such as operations and direction, task force development, and project management and follow-up.

- **Performance Measure** – A statement of how success in achieving an objective will be measured and tracked. They are written in a statement of what will be tracked and trended over time – not the actual target. Indicators of work performed and the results achieved in an activity, process or organizational unit. Performance measures are both financial and nonfinancial and enable periodic comparisons and benchmarking.

- **Resolution** - A resolution is a formal expression of opinion, will or intent by an official body or assembled group.

- **Strategy** – Plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

- **Strategic Plan** – Defining direction and making decisions on allocating resources to pursue the strategy.

- **State Leaders and HOD Community (SLHOD Community)** – The official Community for CSA leaders and the House of Delegates. It is a public Community that any interested AHIMA member can join. CSA leaders and delegate should join this Community when their term begins and visit it at least weekly.
For information about the House of Delegates, please visit our website at AHIMA House of Delegates.

For questions, please contact the Profession Governance team:
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