
AHIMA Announces Data for Better Health Initiative Aimed to Transform Healthcare



The American Health Information Management Association announced its Data for Better Health Initiative.

This initiative seeks to change the healthcare landscape by improving awareness of the transformative potential of social determinants of health (SDOH) data to improve health outcomes.

This AHIMA initiative aims to empower healthcare professionals, thought leaders, policymakers, and the general public with the knowledge and resources needed to leverage SDOH data for enhancing the well-being of individuals and communities.

According to the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, 20% of our overall health is linked to access to healthcare and the quality of healthcare services. Whilst the remaining 80% is shaped by other determinants such as an individual's physical surroundings, socioeconomic factors including education and employment status, as well as health-related behaviors such as diet and exercise.

The AHIMA Data for Better Health initiative has several objectives, including: educating consumers about the benefits of sharing their SDOH data with healthcare professionals; promoting a data-driven SDOH advocacy agenda; involving healthcare workforce professionals to improve the collection, utilisation, and sharing of SDOH data; supporting innovation within the healthcare sector to advance best practices.

The initiative's announcement follows a commissioned study by AHIMA, which examined the collection, integration and application of SDOH data.

The research revealed that healthcare professionals frequently lack adequate training and education to effectively gather, record, code, and employ SDOH data. Additionally, there was evidence of a lack of standardisation and integration of SDOH data into individual medical records.

The AHIMA Board President/Chair Jennifer Mueller, said, "To truly enhance health outcomes, AHIMA is dedicated to instigating change within the healthcare industry, engaging consumers, influencing policy, and expediting the utilisation of SDOH data".

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Published on : Fri, 13 Oct 2023