



Health Career Directory

Health Information Management Professional

Overview

Health information management professionals collect, record, review and manage health information. They protect the integrity, privacy, and confidentiality of personal health information. They also collect and interpret the data that influences decisions affecting health services.

Health records contain information about patients' medical histories and courses of treatment. For example, they may include physicians' notes, forms for prescribed medications, feedback from other members of the treatment team or test results.

Health information management professionals manage both the records and the information they contain. They also provide guidance and knowledge to other health professionals across different organizations and care settings.

Duties are different from one position to another. In general, however, health information management professionals:

- translate information from paper documents to electronic records
- convert a patient's diagnostic and intervention information to a standardized format using an international classification system
- make sure that every patient's record is complete, accurate, and secure.
- make sure that every patient's record is readily available for appropriate release
- identify and perform appropriate data quality checks to make sure records and databases are correct
- protect and release patient information
- collect additional information about patients and their hospital stays to create data about the patient population
- use computer applications to organize, gather, sort, group, retrieve, analyze and present health data in ways that are useful for planning, research and education.

Health statistics are used to inform complex decisions. These decisions range from how to improve patient care to how to distribute resources.

Who is suited to become a health information management professional?

Health information management professionals:

- tend to prefer work responsibilities that require a high degree of accuracy, responsibility and attention to detail.

- take a methodical approach to compiling and classifying information
- participate in data quality initiatives
- operate information retrieval systems
- respond to requests for information.

Health information management professionals need skills and knowledge related to:

- biomedical sciences (anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology)
- information sciences and technology
- the health care system in Canada
- laws and regulations governing information security and access
- standardized classification systems and technologies
- clinical data integration and management
- information analysis and presentation
- ethics and practice.

Who employs health information management professionals?

Health informatics professionals are becoming increasingly employed by the health authorities/employers in BC Health information management professionals generally work a standard work week. If health record departments are open longer hours then may be required to work shifts.

A significant part of a typical day is spent in an office working at a computer. There is considerable pressure to be accurate, as well as fast, because mistakes could have a negative effect on patient health planning or health care funding,

Salary

Hourly Range - 17.67 - \$23.28

Required Training and Education to Become a health information management professional

Health information management professionals may acquire the necessary skills and knowledge by taking a full time program at a post-secondary institution or by taking a distance education program.

Graduates of Canadian Health Information Management Association (CHIMA) programs are eligible to write a national certification examination. Employers may prefer to hire applicants who have a related degree or they may require applicants with a diploma to work towards a degree.

The Canadian Healthcare Association offers a two year Health Information Management program. Applicants must be employed in a health organization, have Grade 12 or equivalent education, and be proficient in English and with computers (demonstrated through successful completion of an Access course). This program includes practical experience sessions and field placements.

For current information about programs, admission requirements and mature student admission policies please check post-secondary calendars or websites.

Career Advancement

Health information management professionals work for:

- hospitals, clinics and community care facilities
- Workers Compensation Board offices
- research facilities
- government department and privacy commissioners' offices
- Canadian Institute for Health Information.

Those interested in travel may find employment outside Canada with the World Health Organization or through foreign recruitment agencies.

Resources

University of Victoria

<http://www.uvic.ca/hsd/hinf/>

Dalhousie University

<http://www.healthinformatics.dal.ca/>

Ryerson University

<http://www.ryerson.ca/hsm/>

University of Toronto

<http://www.ihpme.utoronto.ca/>

University of Winnipeg

<http://www.acs.uwinnipeg.ca/>

York University

<http://shpm.info.yorku.ca/>

Financial assistance and bursaries

For information about Canada student loans and grants, please visit:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/index.shtml

Associations

American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)

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

Canadian Health Information Management Association (CHIMA)

<https://www.echima.ca/>

Health Information Management Association of Alberta (HIMAA)

<http://www.himaa.ca/>

Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA)

<http://www.hsaa.ca/>