



Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA)

As a credentialed health information management professional, your certification speaks to your successful completion of a rigorous academic program and dedication to a lifetime of professional growth and continuing education. You have earned a unique credential in the field of managing health information and have proven your competency for a career in health information management. But not everyone is aware of what goes into acquiring a credential, and more importantly, not everyone realizes what an asset an AHIMA credentialed individual can be. That's why we've developed the questions and answers below. Use them on job interviews, to inform colleagues of what you do and why your credential is a virtual guarantee of professional quality, and to create your own presentations, so you can educate interested parties in just how important your credential is to your career success and that of the HIM industry.

Q: What kind of positions do RHIAs hold?

A: In a recent membership survey, AHIMA found that more than half of the RHIA respondents were directors, managers, or consultants, with nearly 31 percent serving as health information management directors. Historically, most RHIAs have held the title of director of the health information management department of an acute care facility, but today other career opportunities abound, including privacy officer, patient information coordinator, information security manager, and data quality manager. As patient records evolve toward computerization and as more entities such as third-party payers require high-health data, RHIAs benefit from a wide selection of roles across the industry.

Q: How many people are currently certified at the RHIA level?

A: AHIMA has nearly 17,000 RHIA-credentialed individuals working in the healthcare industry.

Q: Why is having an RHIA on staff important?

A: Patient information is a strategic asset for healthcare organizations. The RHIA credential demonstrates unique capabilities in:

- Designing processes and administering systems to produce accurate and complete health records
- Managing paper or computer-based record systems
- Improving the quality of patient data
- Confirming accurate coding for reimbursement
- Ensuring compliance (for example, Joint Commission and state and federal laws) with standards and regulations relating to managing health records and information
- Preparing and analyzing clinical data for quality improvement, clinical trials, disease management, utilization management, and mandatory reporting.

Q: What makes certification from the American Health Information Management

Association (AHIMA) special? Don't other organizations offer similar certification?

A: No. AHIMA is currently the only certification body for Health Information Management professionals. At the very least, RHIA's must have earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited health information administration program. A post-baccalaureate certificate or master's degree in health information administration from an accredited program also enables individuals to take the RHIA exam. AHIMA's standards are stringent. AHIMA has been offering certification to HIM professionals since 1933.

Why would you accept anything less for your organization? If managing your strategic asset-health information- is your goal, then you need the quality and expertise the RHIA certification signifies.

Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT)

As a credentialed health information management professional, your certification speaks to your successful completion of a rigorous academic program and dedication to a lifetime of professional growth and continuing education. You have earned a unique credential in the field of managing health information and have proven your competency for a career in health information management. But not everyone is aware of what goes into acquiring a credential, and more importantly, not everyone realizes what an asset an AHIMA credentialed individual can be. That's why we've developed the questions and answers below. Use them on job interviews, to inform colleagues of what you do and why your credential is a virtual guarantee of professional quality, and to create your own presentations, so you can educate interested parties in just how important your credential is to your career success and that of the HIM industry.

Q: What does the Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) do?

A: RHITs are health information technicians who work to ensure the quality of health records and health care data by verifying their completeness, accuracy, and proper entry into computer systems. They use computer applications to assemble and analyze patient data to improve patient care and control healthcare costs. In addition, RHITs may specialize in coding diagnoses and procedures in patient records for reimbursement and research or they may supervise coding or other clinical data management functions.

Q: What kind of positions do RHITs hold?

A: In AHIMA's recent membership survey, the majority of RHIT respondents held job titles in one of the following categories: coding/technician or manager/supervisor. With experience, the RHIT credential holds solid potential for advancement to management positions, especially if it is combined with a bachelor's degree. As patient records evolve toward computerization and as more entities such as third-party payers require health data, RHITs benefit from a wide selection of roles in the industry.

Q: How many people are currently certified at the RHIT level?

A: AHIMA has over 18,000 RHIT-credentialed individuals working in the healthcare industry. Medical records and health information technicians is one of the fastest growing occupations, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The agency expects

a 49% growth in jobs in this field between 2000 and 2010.

Q: Where do RHITs work?

A: Although most RHITs work in hospitals, you will also find them in a variety of other healthcare settings including office-based physician practices, nursing homes, home health agencies, mental health facilities, and public health agencies and private corporations. In fact employment opportunities exist for RHITs in any organization that uses patient data or health information such as pharmaceutical companies, law and insurance firms, and health product vendors.

Q: Why is having an RHIT on your staff important?

A: The access and quality of health information affects the quality of patient care and effective healthcare management. Accordingly, the RHIT credential demonstrates a broad understanding of health data and its many uses. The credential proves tested data quality and integrity skills. The RHIT certification also demonstrates technical coding expertise in addition to an array of skills needed in today's health information management areas.

Q: What makes certification from the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) special? Don't other organizations offer similar certification?

A: AHIMA is currently the only certification body for Health Information Management professionals. At the very least, RHITs must have earned an associate's degree from an accredited health information technology program. AHIMA's standards are stringent. AHIMA has been offering the RHIT credential since 1955.

Why would you accept anything less for your organization? If managing your strategic asset-health information- is your goal, then you need the quality and expertise the RHIA certification signifies.