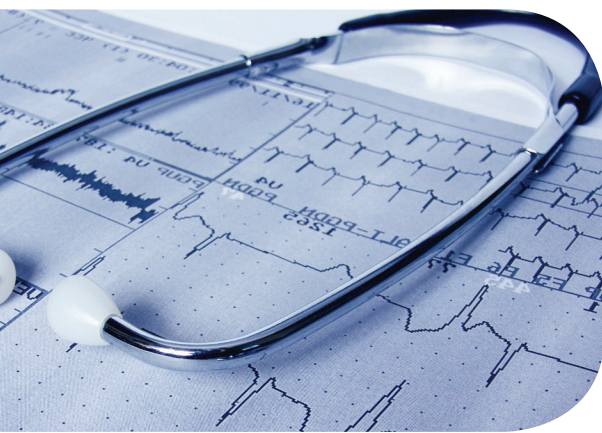


Executive **SUMMARY**

Health Information Insights: **USING IG TO IMPROVE HEALTH SYSTEM PERFORMANCE**



While **65** percent of healthcare organizations have formal information governance programs in place, only **17** percent consider their IG practices mature.

As healthcare information proliferates, Health Information Management (HIM) professionals need a framework to effectively manage this information throughout its lifecycle. Well-developed information governance strategies can help healthcare providers achieve their goals and improve performance.

A recent benchmark survey conducted by Cohasset Associates and the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) reveals that while 65 percent of healthcare organizations have formal information governance programs in place, only 17 percent consider their IG practices mature. Moreover, just 10 percent of organizations report having established measures and metrics to guide their information governance and enterprise information management.

During a recent web seminar hosted by Health Data Management, Dr. Sofia Empel, a leading information governance authority and former member of AHIMA's Task Force on Information Governance for Healthcare, described a set principles and guidelines for creating such a framework, setting goals and measuring results.

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Survey Findings

The AHIMA survey contained four important findings, Empel noted:

1. First, enterprise-wide IG programs are less prevalent and less mature in healthcare organizations than in non-healthcare organizations. Empel, called this situation “alarming given the importance of healthcare information and the complexity of the healthcare information environment.”
2. Second, most organizations haven’t established a comprehensive IG strategy. While over 90 percent of respondents recognize the importance of IG, and two-thirds recognize the need to formalize governance practices, only one out of three has taken steps to do so.
3. Third, across the range of essential information management functions, including data quality, privacy and security, lifecycle management and information usage, the strongest performance appears to be in privacy and security. This result isn’t surprising, Empel said, as security and privacy are very highly regulated.
4. Finally, respondents acknowledged the need to improve even foundational and long-standing functions, such as records retention and destruction and data quality.

A related finding is that only 15 percent of organizations are training employees in IG practices. Taken together, Empel said that the survey suggests that there are many opportunities for IG improvement.

“Metrics and measurements are integral to Information Governance because IG is essentially a performance and process improvement initiative,” she explained. “Like all quality improvement, information governance is achieved not by caveat, but by stepwise improvements guided by measures and often by necessity.”

An IG Framework

Formalizing IG across the organization is a collaborative effort, Empel continued. Stakeholders, including auditors, regulators, patients and litigators, often have different expectations about what an IG program should achieve.

Information governance maximizes the value of information, while reducing risks and costs. Like other assets, such as money, infrastructure and inventory, the value of information optimized by how well it is governed and managed.

All successful IG programs have one thing in common: senior level support at the highest levels of the organization. The first step in gaining support for an IG initiative in an organization is to start with a clear understanding of the organization's strategic goals and how each IG goal will advance each of the organization's top priorities.

For provider organizations, high priority goals frequently include:

- Redesigning and bridging the delivery of acute, ambulatory and other levels of care across all disease stages and risk levels.
- Improving outcomes and safety, and advancing a culture of quality and greater transparency.
- Managing shrinking margins due to reimbursement cuts, decreasing inpatient volumes and the shift to risk-sharing and performance-based payments.
- Managing the burden and cost of regulation such as the transition to ICD-10; responding to recovery audit contractor (RAC) investigations; avoiding fines and data breaches.

IG Metrics

Measures and metrics are key to good information governance, Empel emphasized. Practices and results are audited for compliance and for adherence to goals and targets. Measures and metrics raise awareness of the current state of information with respect to controls, risks, and vulnerabilities. One way to gauge strategic performance is through high-level metrics related to patient care and operations.

Patient care can be measured by benchmarking quality and safety. Likewise, care management metrics can be used to measure and control effectiveness. Strategic performance is also measured by operational considerations such as performance-based contracting and accurate and timely reimbursement.

What metrics are used and how they are measured depends on the type of organization, its work processes, and its goals.

Information Governance vs. Information Management

Empel then turned to the relationship between information governance and information management. Governance, she said, is strategic, while management is tactical.

Governance includes structures, functions and processes, whereas management is concerned with day-to-day activities. But the boundary between governance and management isn't hard and fast, and the extent of an organization's IG should be proportionate to its size and related subparts.

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Taken together, the principles of **IGPHC** paint a picture of what good IG looks like and allow an organization to get a high-level view of its IG initiatives.

Also, strategic performance measures don't operate in a vacuum. They have to be considered in relation to IG program maturity and enterprise information management measures. Taken together these elements comprise the metrics dashboard for an IG program and provide the "bigger picture" of IG within an organization.

It is important to assess how an organization's IG efforts are maturing, Empel observed. AHIMA developed the Information Governance Principles for Healthcare, commonly referred to as IGPHC, to help healthcare organizations evaluate their information governance maturity. The framework measures IG effectiveness across eight principles, from accountability to disposition.



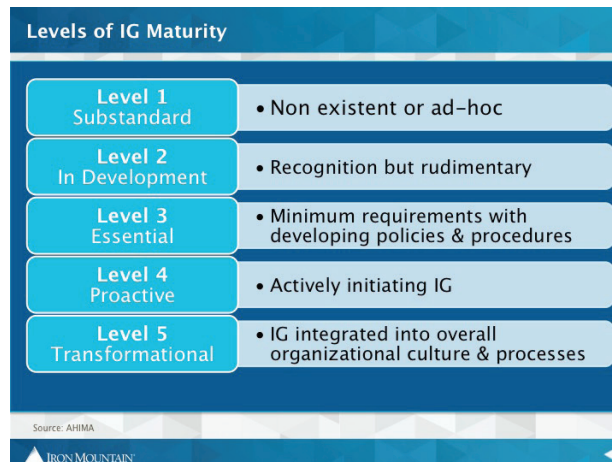
Taken together, the principles of IGPHC paint a picture of what good IG looks like and allow an organization to get a high-level view of its IG initiatives. This perspective can be used by a provider and its stakeholders to guide its IG actions and to judge the effectiveness of the organization's information governance program.

The IG Maturity Model

To compliment IGPHC, AHIMA also developed an IG Maturity Model. This scalable IG framework lets organizations assess what they are doing well and where they need improvement, and keep their initiatives within the bounds of the resources that they have available.

The maturity model organizes and measures IG risks based the eight IGPHC principles, which can be easily understood and implemented by many different stakeholders and used as the basis for periodic audits.

The maturity model permits an organization to focus on those areas of IG that it feels are important, be they certain principles, particular parts of the organization or even specific processes or procedures. This allows for a natural progression of IG improvement and helps to frame stakeholder expectations.



The maturity model also provides a yardstick by which a healthcare organization can compare its processes and procedures to IG best practices and external benchmarks. Maturity for each IGPHC principle is ranked on a scale from 1 to 5, with a score of 1 indicating “sub-standard” practices and a score of five awarded to “transformational” undertakings.

The level of maturity will vary for most organizations from principle to principle, Empel said, and very few will score a 5 in each of the eight categories. This, she added, is to be expected, since information governance is a continuous improvement process.

The maturity model can be used for gap analysis, benchmarking and risk assessment, as well as program evaluation and development. But identifying the maturity level for each principle, Empel concluded, opens the door to ongoing improvements.

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