

2014 Canadian Health Information Management Association Conference

Aspire and Lead

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The theme of the 2014 Canadian Health Information Management Association (CHIMA) Conference was Aspire and Lead. The organizers did a great job in keeping this theme at the forefront throughout the entire conference.

Stacey Colameco was the first to inspire us with a reminder of our value and importance as Health Information Management Professionals. Gail Crook and Nancy Haugen followed with an update on CHIMA activities starting with the CHIMA Board of Directors meeting with a variety of stakeholders to promote the profession. This included lobbying for coding and Health Information Management (HIM) leadership positions to be filled by certified HIM professionals only. They closed with an exciting announcement that CHIMA will be moving towards a new chapter model with Provincial Associations in 2016/2017. An announcement, via CHIMA E-Bulletin, will be sent to all CHIMA members.

Dr. Merita Johns from the Monarch Center in the United States inspired us to “Break the Glass Ceiling”. In an interactive speech, she had us shouting, “Yes, we are up for the challenge” throughout the presentation. She emphasized that the health care system needs our influence and voice at the table. She listed a number of barriers that held women back. This included a cautious approach to new jobs, lower career clarity, and a reluctance to promote self. These can all be overcome by empowering ourselves. Dr. Johns' steps to empowerment included identifying your strengths, developing a personal vision, knowing your purpose and knowing what you want. We all left the session aspiring to lead, with the charge, “We are up for the challenge!”

Kathleen Addison, the Senior Provincial Director of Health Information Management Services for Alberta Health Services (AHS), shared with us the Alberta business transformation process.

Here are some processes that AHS developed to encourage their staff into taking on new roles:

- Creating an organizational structure that supports leadership for future roles
- Providing learning opportunities that explain future roles
- Working with staff on their career goals

She encouraged staff to position themselves for future opportunities by engaging in activities such as attending webinars, maintaining membership in professional associations, formalizing learning and keeping up with websites such as HIMAA, COACH, AHIMA and CHIMA and volunteering on committees. She closed with a quote, “Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice”.

The second day started with an inspirational keynote speaker, Eddie Lemoire. With his topic, “Bring About What you Think About”, he encouraged us to focus our attention and energy on what we want to bring into our lives. His key steps were to:

1. Do a dream sheet
2. Believe
3. Be Receptive.

A fun feature on Friday was a panel discussion with six HIM professionals profiling their work and how they got to this place in their career. Directors, Analysts, Consultants and Program Coordinators represented the panel. They peppered their discussion with these encouraging messages:

- Be open to new opportunities
- Look outside the box
- Build on your capabilities
- Stay current on HIM topic
- Build relationships

They agreed that we have all had someone who pushed and opened doors for us and through networking and mentoring we can also lead and inspire other HIM professionals to make an impact in our workplace.

The next group of speakers addressed continuing education for HIM professionals. Gail Crook spoke about a new initiative to provide advanced certificates. These will be offered in the following areas:

1. Clinical coding
2. Terminology Standards
3. Clinical Documentation

Following, Candace Gibson from Western University demonstrated an innovative web tool that her students developed. It is an interactive diagram that maps out five career domains, with expertise levels from entry to master, as well as identifying all educational opportunities available. Watch for this in an upcoming CHIMA E-Bulletin.

The final speaker, Monica Olsen, spoke on Emotional Intelligence. She described Emotional Intelligence as the “emotional” and “social skills” which collectively establishes how well we cope with challenges as well as how we perceive and express ourselves. Emotional Intelligence has a greater impact on our career success than intelligence. The key take-away point for me was a reminder to stay positive. “Positive emotions widen our attention and our receptiveness to new and unexpected events, while pessimism narrows our focus.”

Thank you to the HRABC and the Northern Health Authority for allowing me to attend this conference. It was very inspiring to sit among the giants of our profession and to learn from them. Networking with HIM professionals across the country helps to remind me of how many of us there are and how much we have to offer.