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Health Care Professionals May Want to Change the Way They Think About Release of Information

Ensuring Patients Are Provided Meaningful Choice Will Require Education and Awareness



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Health information exchange (HIE) is bringing new challenges and new ways of thinking in the workplace. With the focus on broad exchange and the sharing of health information on a national stage, a pattern shift is occurring within our workplaces.

Where we once felt a solid knowledge of processes, policy, and procedure surrounding the release of information (ROI), we are now embarking on a new environment where components of our legal health record are being shared and exchanged widely outside of our facilities. This is causing many health care professionals to change the way they think about ROI, only increasing the need for expert involvement and organizational-wide education in this area.

The following is an excerpt from the practice brief titled, "Understanding the HIE Landscape," which was recently updated by an AHIMA Workgroup and published in the January issue of the *Journal of AHIMA*. This passage discusses the complexity and changing role of ROI and the significance of educating patients on "meaningful choice" in HIE.

EXCERPT:

Release of Information Challenges: Many laws and regulations currently govern how, when, what, and to whom protected health information is released. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy rule and Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act contain specific requirements for the management of personally identifiable health information that balance confidentiality of



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