

Health Information Management

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A. Occupations

1) Health Information Management Professional (HIMP)

- Also called Health Records Technician (HRT) or Health Records Technologist (HRT)
- Not a regulated profession in Ontario
- Certification available - Canadian College of Health Record Administrators <http://www.chima-cchra.ca>

Role

- Work with confidential health records: format, content, quality and use
- HIMPs work with confidential health records, capturing and encoding patient information, analyzing data and preparing reports for use in health care planning and delivery, research and financial planning
- May specialize in areas such as research, management, quality improvement, risk analysis, clinical trials and clinical-financial resource integration
- Protect the privacy and security of data
- Analyze this data and turning it into reports
- Control the release of medico-legal information
- Review patient record upon discharge and determining the accuracy and completeness of the records
- Evaluate standards of documentation according to established criteria
- Provide essential information for clinical research, quality improvement, utilization review, budgeting and other administrative applications
- Collect, analyze and presenting statistical data
- Advise other health care professionals and the public on health information
- Classify, code, cross-reference, and store health records and related data in hospitals, clinics and other healthcare institutions

For a list of competencies required for entry to practice certification see the Certification Exam Booklet: <http://www.chima-cchra.ca/prof/index.html>

Educational Requirements

- Complete a 2 year college (i.e., Health Records Technician) or a 4 year university program (i.e., Bachelor Health Science plus honors Health Information Management)
- Upon graduation, pass the CCHRA national certification exam to obtain the professional designation CCHRA(C). This certification is portable across all provinces
- Programs are offered at Fleming and George Brown colleges and Ryerson and Western universities. A correspondence course is offered through the Canadian Healthcare Association
- For a listing of CCHRA-recognized programs, see the CCHRA web site: <http://www.chima-cchra.ca>
- Program courses include:

- Human Sciences
Health Care, Anatomy, Physiology, Medical Ethics, Health Law, Biostatistics, Epidemiology
- Technology
Computer Science, Information Systems, Health Information & Record Management, Project Management, Database Management, Industry Statistics & Research Methods

Skills/Qualities

Technical

A sophisticated computer user with skills including:

- Word processing, internet, email, presentation programs, spreadsheet manipulation and database knowledge
- Custom health programs, system management, large client database, office management (total office administration and organization), statistical analysis software
- Research design and manipulation: use computer technologies to capture, manage and analyze data

Communication

- Excellent oral and written communication skills

Other

- Knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pathology
- Knowledge of medical terminology
- Mature and responsible
- Attention to detail, organization and accuracy
- Analytical, statistical, problem solving and report writing skills
- Self-motivated, initiative
- Able to multi-task
- Respond well to management and cooperative environments
- Effective interpersonal skills and ability to work in a team setting
- Work well under pressure and be able to observe deadlines.
- Ability to exercise independent judgment

Typical Employers

Source: <http://www.chima-cchra.ca/prof/index.html>

- Hospitals, within the departments of:
 - Health Records/Information Services
 - Admitting
 - Quality Management
 - Research and Statistics
 - Information Systems
 - Utilization Management
 - Risk Management
- Government agencies
- Educational institutions
- Community health clinics
- Law offices
- Insurance companies
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Primary care agencies
- Nursing homes and long term care facilities

Other employers include:

- Ambulatory Care Facilities
- Community Care Access Centres
- Workplace Health & Safety Boards
- Ministries of Health
- Computer Companies
- Health Record Consulting Firms
- Veterinary Hospitals
- Canadian Institute of Health Information
- Research Centres
- Cancer Centres
- Physician's offices
- Private industry
- Teaching Health Record Technology (college level)
- World Health Organization

Industries where HIM professionals work include:

- Information Technology
- Insurance
- Pharmaceutical
- Medicine and Dentistry
- Law
- Veterinary Sciences
- Health Service Suppliers
- Government

The skills gained as a Health Information Management Professional can be applied in a variety of roles, including:

- Information Analyst
- Chief Information Officer
- Data Quality Manager
- Research Associate
- Documentation Coordinator
- Director of Information Services
- Client Service Manager
- Consultant
- Patient Advocate
- Utilization Manager
- Project Manager
- Decision Support Analyst

Average Hourly Wage

\$20.00/ hour (average) \$32.00/ hour (high)

Salaries vary according to such factors such as experience, level of responsibility, seniority, size of company, size of city, etc.

2) Other Positions in the Field

Health Records Coder (on nursing unit)

- A health records coder uses a classification system to assign code numbers and letters to each symptom, diagnosis, disease, procedure, and operation that appears in the patient's chart. These codes are used for insurance reimbursement, research, health planning analysis, and to make clinical decisions.

- These health information management professionals work on the nursing unit. They extract relevant information from the documentation on the chart and enters it into a database. This provides hospital administration with timely information of use in making decisions related to projected length of stay, use of human resources, bed shortages etc.

Medical Transcriptionist: accurately and quickly transcribe medical records dictated by doctors and others, including history and physical reports, clinic notes, office notes, operative reports, consultation notes, discharge summaries, letters, psychiatric evaluations, laboratory reports, x-ray reports & pathology reports. record and transcribe surgical proceedings, medical records and other reports requiring knowledge of medical terminology.

B) Labour Market Prospects

Source: <http://www.sl.on.ca/fulltime/f0hrt.htm>

Advancements in information technology and changes in health regulations have resulted in an increased demand for and a national shortage of Health Record Technologists (HRT's).

Source: <http://www.chima-cchra.ca/student/index.html>

Health Information Management Professionals are in high demand today - a trend that will only increase in the future. Major changes to our health care system are creating exciting career opportunities in the healthcare, insurance, and legal fields, in addition to provincial and federal governments. Health Information Management Professionals are one of the few professions trained to meet these new challenges.

Source:

http://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/careers/upload/file_collection/Healthcare_factsheets_2003.pdf

The profession of Health Record Technician (HRT) is in extreme demand. Major changes to our health care system are creating exciting career opportunities in the healthcare, insurance and legal fields, in addition to provincial and federal governments. Health Record Technology is a specialized field. The skills gained by a HRT are portable and can be applied in a variety of roles. Due to the combination of the number of graduates along with the demand for more medical data to be captured, there is currently not enough Health Record Technician's to fulfill the demand across Canada.

C) ITPs in the Field

Most backgrounds of ITPs are prepared to work as health records technicians as they have professional knowledge in medical terminology, experience in collecting data and in writing statistical reports. ITPs with strong written language, computer and administrative skills may be interested

D) Links

Educational Institutions

- George Brown College www.gbrownc.on.ca
- Canadian Healthcare Association www.cha.ca (correspondence course)
- St. Lawrence college <http://www.sl.on.ca>

Professional Organizations

- Canadian Health Records Association (CHRA) <http://www.chima-cchra.ca>
- Canadian Health Information Management Association <http://www.chima-cchra.ca>
- Ontario Health Records Association www.ohra.ca
- Canadian Institute for Health Information www.cihi.ca

Related Web Sites

- CHRA Student Recruitment Information Brochure <http://www.chima-cchra.ca/student/index.html>
- Info on what is expected of HIM professionals for certification http://www.chima-cchra.ca/download_doc/2005ExamGuide.pdf
- Hamilton Health Sciences occupational fact sheet
http://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/careers/upload/file_collection/Healthcare_factsheets_2003.pdf
- Article: Responding to the Health Information Crisis <http://www.artc-hsr.ca/Thesis%20Summary%20Brie%20Morey.pdf>