

# What is Data Integrity?

BY JAY CANNON,  
2007 MTIA PRESIDENT

**It really is an honor** to have the opportunity to provide thoughts to *Health Data Matrix* as part of the partnership between AHDI and MTIA. We have faced many changes this year, and I can honestly say they have all moved the association forward. We have completed the partnership with AHDI, put in place a new CEO and operations staff, moved the association office, published a ground-breaking white paper on a recommended unit of measure with AHIMA, launched the workforce development initiatives with the military and apprenticeship programs, taken a leadership role with the CDA4CDT initiative, and completed the most successful annual conference to date in Jacksonville, Florida.

However, we have many opportunities in the year ahead, with significant focus around data integrity, which is the central topic of this issue. In my opinion, data integrity is very complex due to the multi-disciplinary processes and large number of stakeholders involved in all levels of clinical document creation. A logical place to start of course is standards. We have today a standard for information exchange in HL7, but this does not ensure content, just agreed-upon structure for standard transaction exchange. Steps are being made to address the content around



narrative structure with the pending HL7 ballot on CDA4CDT. This clinical documentation architecture pertaining to specific document types is a great start to ensuring content is structured for more meaningful and useful purposes.

Finally, if we have the ability to structure transaction exchanges and content, the next logical step would be the quality of the document itself. I believe too much time has been spent in and around medical transcription attempting to define document quality instead of evaluating the processes and applications that are contributing the pieces of information necessary for document creation. If the required information is defined, standards utilized and

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each piece of the contributing information (data and narrative) evaluated for being complete and accurate, the process of medical transcription can evolve to the next level. This

allows for the profession of medical transcription to fully leverage the knowledge base of the skilled transcriptionist. **M**

**JAY CANNON** is currently the President and COO for Webmedx. Prior to joining Webmedx, he was a co-founder of Spheris and served in senior management positions with MEDIFAX, Inc./Secrephone and MRC. Jay currently serves as President of the Medical Transcription Industry Association. He received degrees in Business Administration and Economics from the University of Kansas. Jay lives with his family (Meg, Parker and Will) in Franklin, TN.

## DID YOU KNOW?

MODESTO AND CHICAGO, January 31, 2007 – The Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity (AHDl) – formerly the American Association for Medical Transcription – and the Medical Transcription Industry Association (MTIA) announced today that the organizations have formed a strategic legal partnership to pool critical resources and collaborate on key initiatives. Under the guide star of “optimizing healthcare delivery by providing timely, accurate and relevant clinical information,” the associations have formed a business relationship that will allow for the outsourcing of selected MTIA business operations to AHDl, the equal utilization of a mutually agreed upon Executive Director, and merging of efforts on agreed-upon tactical and strategic initiatives as defined under the relationship.

You will find the full press release outlining the goals and objectives of this partnership at the AHDl website ([www.ahdionline.org](http://www.ahdionline.org)) under Advocacy/About AHDl/Press Releases.

## Education Approval Program

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