



HEALTH INFORMATION CAREERS

Traditional RHIA Pathway

Quick Facts:

Goal: Get a baccalaureate college degree to begin or advance a career as an HIM professional

Time needed to complete path: 4 years

Average salary: \$68,213 in 2008

What is an RHIA?

RHIA stands for Registered Health Information Administrator. Working as a critical link between care providers, payers, and patients, the RHIA is an expert in managing patient health information and medical records, administering computer information systems, collecting and analyzing patient data, and using classification systems and medical terminologies. RHIAs possess comprehensive knowledge of medical, administrative, ethical and legal requirements and standards related to healthcare delivery and the privacy of protected patient information. They often manage people and operational units, participate in administrative committees, and prepare budgets.

What education will I need?

You will need a bachelor's degree from a CAHIIM-accredited program. [Click here](#) to find an accredited program.

If you already have an RHIT credential, you may be able to get your bachelor's degree in two years! A few of these programs are designed as 2+2 programs meaning they are especially designed for professionals in the field who already have an RHIT credential and wish to upgrade to a baccalaureate degree and secure an RHIA credential. There are approximately 50 baccalaureate accredited programs in the US and instruction is offered as both online and campus based programs.

Once I complete my courses and get my degree, what's the next step?

You can take a national credentialing exam for health information administration to get your RHIA credential. [Click here](#) to learn more about the exam.

Where can I work once I'm an RHIA?

Job opportunities for RHIAs exist in multiple settings throughout the healthcare industry. These include the continuum of care delivery organizations, including hospitals, multispecialty clinics and physician practices, long-term care, mental health, and other ambulatory care settings. The profession has seen significant expansion in non-patient care settings, with careers in managed care and insurance companies, software vendors, consulting services, government agencies, education, and pharmaceutical companies.

Employment change: Employment of medical and health services managers is expected to grow 16 percent from 2008 to 2018, faster than the average for all occupations. The healthcare industry will

continue to expand and diversify, requiring managers to help ensure smooth business operations. Managers in all settings will be needed to improve quality and efficiency of healthcare, while controlling costs, as insurance companies and Medicare demand higher levels of accountability. Managers also will be needed to oversee the computerization of patient records and to ensure their security as required by law. Additional demand for managers will stem from the need to recruit workers and increase employee retention, to comply with changing regulations, to implement new technology, and to help improve the health of their communities by emphasizing preventive care.

Hospitals will continue to employ the most medical and health services managers over the 2008-18 decade. However, the number of new jobs created is expected to increase at a slower rate in hospitals than in many other industries because of the growing use of clinics and other outpatient care sites. Despite relatively slow employment growth in hospitals, a large number of new jobs will be created because of the industry's large size.

Employment will grow fast in offices of health practitioners. Many services previously provided in hospitals will continue to shift to these settings, especially as medical technologies improve. Demand in medical group practice management will grow as medical group practices become larger and more complex.

Medical and health services managers also will be employed by healthcare management companies that provide management services to hospitals and other organizations and to specific departments such as emergency, information management systems, managed care contract negotiations, and physician recruiting.

Job opportunities will be good, especially for applicants with work experience in healthcare and strong business management skills. Medical and health services managers with experience in large hospital facilities will enjoy an advantage in the job market, as hospitals become larger and more complex. Competition for jobs at the highest management levels will be keen because of the high pay and prestige.

How can I further my career?

- CAHIIM-approved and accredited Master's Degree programs for [Health Information Management](#) and [Health Informatics](#)
- [Professional advanced certifications \(CHDA, CHPS\)](#)