To Whom it May Concern:

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is pleased to nominate seven Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes relating to the health information (HI) profession for inclusion in the US Department of Homeland Security's (DHS') STEM Designated Degree Program List. Inclusion of these codes in the STEM designation will strengthen the field of HI and grow the STEM field as a whole.

AHIMA is a global nonprofit association of health information professionals, boasting over 61,000 members and more than 88,500 credentials in the field. The AHIMA mission of empowering people to impact health® drives its members and credentialed HI professionals to ensure that health information is accurate, complete, and available to patients and providers. Leaders within AHIMA work at the intersection of healthcare, technology, and business, occupying data integrity and information privacy job functions worldwide.

The codes we are proposing for addition to the STEM Designated Degree Program List include:

- CIP 51.0706 - Health Information/Medical Records Administration/Administrator
- CIP 51.0707 - Health Information/Medical Records Technology/Technician
- CIP 51.0713 - Medical Insurance Coding Specialist/Coder/Coder
- CIP 51.0714 - Medical Insurance Specialist/Medical Biller
- CIP 51.0715 - Health/Medical Claim Examiner
- CIP 51.0717 - Medical Staff Services Technology/Technician
- CIP 51.0799 - Health and Medical Administrative Services, Other

HI students and professionals nationwide participate in crucial healthcare science activities through the management of health data and related information technology infrastructure. Trusted data exchange is paramount to the delivery of care with HI professionals serving as the backbone responsible for data exchange. With many healthcare professions already included under the STEM Designated Degree Program List, the inclusion of these additional codes will further bolster the program by including additional roles that are connected to existing STEM Degree Programs.

HI professionals in the course of their work must know and understand data structure, content, and information governance including complex medical terminologies and classifications. They also must be experts in data analytics and data use and understand the nuances of health IT system workflows. HI professionals are also crucial enablers of

health data exchange and safe patient care as advocates of both the clinician and the patient within healthcare organizations.

At the same time, the HI profession is one of the fastest growing occupations in the US. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) O*Net currently identifies a number of HI job titles as having a "bright outlook" including medical records specialist, technicians and registrars, clinical data managers, and medical and health service managers.[1] Bright outlook occupations identified by the BLS meet at least one of the following criteria: (1) the occupation is expected to grow faster than average employment (i.e.—an increase of five percent or more) over the period of 2022-2032 for the US nationwide, (2) the occupation is projected to have 100,000 or more job openings in the US over the 2022-2032 time period, and/or (3) is considered a new and emerging occupation.[2] Creating opportunities for students who dream of working in this profession by including the corresponding CIP codes as STEM creates an environment that will strengthen the HI profession for years to come, as well as meet the anticipated demand to help fill these roles.

Inclusion of the proposed CIP codes in the STEM Designated Degree Program also opens avenues of new funding for academic institutions to ensure continued sustainability of the HI professional education pathway. With numerous grants and funding awards available for STEM-classified educational institutions, HI educators will be able to maintain their continued high level of excellence within the classroom and the profession.

Finally, as workflows increasingly become automated in healthcare, it is important to note that the HI professional will play a critical role in the future development and implementation of artificial intelligence (AI)/machine learning (ML) tools. We have already seen non-clinical areas in healthcare impacted by the use of AI/ML due to innovations and advancements in AI/ML tools such as coding, patient matching algorithms, administrative workflow assistance, and utilization management.[3] HI professionals are on the front lines of the development, training, and implementation of these AI tools. As HI professionals increasingly use AI/ML tools, including the proposed codes in the STEM Designated Degree Program will strengthen the program's posture with inclusion of cutting-edge STEM technology professionals.

AHIMA is grateful for the opportunity to nominate the above CIP codes for inclusion in the STEM Designated Degree Program. We know that the HI profession can benefit from its

[1] Available at: https://www.onetonline.org/.
[2] Available at: https://www.onetonline.org/find/bright?b=0.
[3] Available at: https://www.norc.org/content/dam/norc-org/pdf2023/AHIMA-Workforce-Survey-Report-Final-2023.pdf.

inclusion in the STEM Designated Degree Program while ensuring that your program encompasses the nation's most impactful STEM professions. If you have further questions or would like to discuss our nomination further, please contact AHIMA Senior Director of Regulatory and International Affairs, Andrew Tomlinson, at andrew.tomlinson@ahima.org or by phone at 443-676-7106.

Sincerely,

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