



## **Health Information Management (HIM) Overview**

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Health Information Management (HIM) includes three separate modules: Chart Deficiency Tracking, Coding and Abstracting, and the Release of Information. However, there is a fourth module that works in the background called Chart Tracking. All of these modules encompass the previously named department “Medical Records,” now known as Electronic Health Records (EHR). With the urgency of Healthcare reform and in the new era of Meaningful Use, this is the wave of the future for the old Medical Records department.

The first area, and most important to physicians, is the Chart Deficiency Tracking module. This application manages the chart and makes sure providers have completed all documentation in the patient chart. Providers must complete necessary documentation keeping data up-to-date for historic use by the provider, department, and hospital, as well as for present reimbursement by private insurance companies, Medicaid, and Medicare. This is accomplished by the HIM department’s deficiency analyst review of patient records and cross checking that each has the appropriate documentation as mandated by the hospital, state, and joint commission. These rules have been established by the hospital in accordance with state, federal, and joint commission guidelines to protect patient safety and meet insurance guidelines. This is accomplished by any record missing documentation and is communicated in Epic via the In-Basket.

Chart Deficiency Tracking utilizes the In-Basket functionality in Epic to communicate chart deficiencies to providers and advance practice level staff members. Messages are created when a deficiency occurs; however, the message for specific deficiencies can be delayed depending upon how the deficiency is built in the Epic deficiency module. There is a time frame set during the deficiency build as to when the deficiency and the delinquency will “fire,” therefore creating an In-Basket message is necessary. This is where Chart Deficiency Tracking and the In-Basket functionality converge in Epic.

If a chart deficiency is not appropriately handled, a provider does not meet the specified time constraints set forth in the deficiency build, or the provider is late in signing-off the deficiency, therefore that deficiency becomes delinquent. This can place the provider at risk of being suspended per the hospital’s policy of pre-suspension and suspension, in regards to chart deficiencies. This is the reason accurate documentation of the pre-existing workflows in HIM departments is necessary prior to build.

The In-Basket functionality in Epic is a multi-module application and therefore needs to have all multi-disciplinary parties involved. Those modules include, but are not limited to: inpatient, outpatient, Clin-Doc, Orders, and the pharmaceutical module in conjunction with all internally associated hospital staff members. Because of the multi-module/disciplinary interaction, the In-Basket should be included in any change controls already established within the hospital’s administration as well as its IS department. If this is an initial build of Epic, the In-Basket should be included in the hospital’s change controls when establishing system parameters.

However, if the IT department and hospital administration want to consider this new functionality, then this should be added to the change controls already in place.

The next section in the HIM module is the Coding and Abstracting section. This area is directly associated with the hospital's billing and financial section. In fact, all functionality actually takes place in the hospital billing section of Epic. In order for these areas to function appropriately within the module, the HIM analyst must work directly with the hospital billing analyst. The Coding and Abstracting work usually needs to be completed after all chart deficiencies have been completed. If the work is not completed, then vital information needed on the billing end for private insurance companies, Medicare, and Medicaid cannot be completed. One of the most critical impacts to coding and abstracting is the new ICD-10 mandate which must be completed by 2013.

The last section releases information to the patient, the government, law practices for litigation, and insurance companies performing audits. The Release of Information module gives the hospital and the department a tracking mechanism to document when, to whom, and what documents were released. The information is then documented in the patient's record. The patient's record is set-up in "episodes" in the order of occurrence. Not only are hospital episodes recorded in a patient's record, but in addition, all outpatient visits are recorded. This information is then available for release if requested by anyone needing the data. However, this is closely monitored to protect the patient's health information. An appropriate release must be created and approved before a release can ever be completed.

The last section is Chart Tracking. This section is not directly viewable, but is needed primarily for the Chart Deficiency Tracking module and the release-of-information module for the build, maintenance, and support of the HIM module. This assists in coordinating all HIM modules, thus the background functionality runs without issues. In addition to coordinating data, this part also integrates vital reporting functionality. Every piece of the HIM product utilizes a reporting aspect so it functions at its prime efficiency. Since all Epic modules are interconnected, the HIM module is not unique in this aspect. It is related to not only the internal HIM modules, but the Hospital Billing module, all Inpatient (Clin-Doc, Orders) modules, as well as ADT/Prelude®, OpTime® and the Willow application.

If you would like more information about Epic's Health Information Management or other Epic solutions provided by VCS, please contact us at 610.444.1233 or [vcs@getvitalized.com](mailto:vcs@getvitalized.com). Additional information about the services and solutions offered by VCS can be found on our website, [www.getvitalized.com](http://www.getvitalized.com).