

## Advocacy – Members as Patients

### An Interview with Brian Ahier, Health IT Evangelist

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Brian lives in The Dalles, Oregon and has spoken many times for OrHIMA at our Annual Convention and Fall Institute. He is the author of the popular

blog “[Advanced Health Information Exchange Resources](#)” and is a nationally – known expert on health information technology. Brian currently works for Aetna as the Director of Standards and Government Affairs at Medicity. He is recipient of [Rock Health’s](#) 2017 Digital Health Evangelist Award. I ran into Brian in the Rayburn Building of Washington DC during AHIMA Hill Day 2015. He was on his way to thank Congressman Greg Walden (R-Oregon) for the passage of Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA). That’s just the kind of guy Brian is. I couldn’t think of anyone more connected to the health information profession to interview for our “Members as Patients” campaign.



I shared with Brian the information governance (IG) maturity model stages we identified in our last newsletter. To recall, they are At Risk, Aware, Aspirational, Aligned and Actualized. Brian came up with a sixth marker that I call “Audacious” where he describes participating as a care team partner, making recommendations, bilateral-sharing of research and sometimes challenging assumptions. “Not every doctor will like this” Brian says, but relayed that an open-minded and wise clinician understands they don’t know everything and can’t keep up with all of the latest literature or disease communities where subscribers worldwide may share treatment resources and success stories. Brian concludes, “this is shared decision making, an outcome of all the stages” of the IG markers.

The topic of patient ownership of our health data ties in here too. Although the patient is unable to tangibly own the data, we as patients can control the data through “shared stewardship” said Brian. My thoughts on stewardship (the careful and responsible management of something) include actions such as managing the accuracy of your health history, medications and allergies, as well as periodically requesting an accounting of disclosures. Regarding the patient data continuum, Brian talks of the future with “patient mediated exchange or a Health Information Exchange (HIE) of One”, a form of personal health record from disparate sources maintained and shared by the patient with whomever he or she wishes and the patient is the co-steward of the medical record with the clinician.

I asked Brian how he thought portal use/patient engagement might be changing or maturing with MACRA. He pointed out the bar for reporting the effort had not changed much from Meaningful Use; mainly having the capacity to fulfill communication. What it will take today is “consumer outreach and patient education efforts” to define why patients should have access

to their information and why they should be involved. He notes technology gaps through generations and/or lack of resources as a barrier to outreach.

Brian looks forward to the day when the clinician and patient are equal members of the care team with timely test results (with discretion of course) so we as patients can process results and prepare appropriate questions for the follow up visits. Currently, “even though we may be engaged and empowered, we still can’t bulldoze our way in to be an equal partner in our care.”

When asked if any sort of repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would impact public good efforts, Brian references that MACRA and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act (including statutory definition of interoperability) have strong information technology components that an ACA repeal cannot take away.

I asked Brian what he saw as the missed opportunity when patients are not engaged in their personal healthcare. “The problem here if you are not engaged, you are absolved of all responsibility.” A clinician can only do so much with the amount of time in the office and with 99.85% of our time spent outside the healthcare control, often it’s the social determinates of health (#SDoH) that influences our wellbeing.

Thank you Brian for taking some time with OrHIMA regarding our Members as Patients Campaign. We look forward to an opportunity for you to speak at an OrHIMA conference or event.

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OrHIMA Advocacy Director

[Patient Matching Problems Routine in Healthcare](#)