



"Our Home is Under the Dome"



Write to Congress
or your Florida State

Senator or Representative Now: [Click Here](#)

I. Welcome to the FHIMA 2 + 2 Advocacy Assistant

Welcome to the FHIMA 2 + 2 Advocacy Assistant. The Assistant is designed to address advocacy and government relations at the federal, state, and local level. The tool kit will describe advocacy and advocacy elements while also providing important resources and electronic links to helpful information. Not only can you learn about advocacy, you can find your federally elected legislators and the President directly from [here](#).

The purpose of the 2 + 2 Advocacy Assistant is to improve FHIMA's advocacy initiatives with federal and state legislatures, administrative agencies, and the communities in which we live.

Further, the Assistant's objective is to educate FHIMA members in the tools and approaches to advocacy and government relations that can be used on an individual, group, or employer basis.

What Is Advocacy

Webster's New College Dictionary defines advocacy as "Active support, as of a cause." When you boil down what we do on a public policy basis, we support causes. The cause may be the enactment of legislation or the defeat of legislation. In short, we are "Advocates", or:

1. "One who supports or defends a cause."
2. "One who pleads on another's behalf."

Wikipedia defines lobbying is a concerted effort designed to achieve some result, typically from government authorities and elected officials. Lobbying can be private or public, or combinations of both public and private actions.

Florida Statutes (11.045) defines lobbying as "influencing or attempting to influence legislative action or non-action through oral or written communication or an attempt to obtain goodwill of a member or employee of the Legislature."

Why We Should Advocate

The United States of America is a representative democracy, which means that we elect individuals to represent our interests. Many of us take advantage of and exercise

our constitutional right to vote, but then feel that we have done our duty. Well, in our great society, our duty does not stop at the voting booth. When we limit our participation to just voting, we leave our elected officials in a vacuum. We have a right and a duty to inform our elected officials of how we feel about certain issues. If they do not learn from those who voted them into office, they will receive their information from individuals, groups, or other elected officials who may not have your best interests at heart. For our representative democracy to work properly and in the best interests of all, we must inform our elected representatives about our views. We must all become advocates.



FHIMA 2 +2 Advocacy Assistant Table of Contents

- I. Welcome to the FHIMA 2 + 2 Advocacy Assistant 2007
 - II. 2 +2 Advocacy Assistant - Who We Are
 - III. 2 +2 Advocacy Assistant Communication Guidelines
 - IV. 2+2 Advocacy Assistant: A Brief Guide
 - V. 2 +2 Advocacy Assistant 2007 National Advocacy Alert
(2007 Talking Points)
 - VI. 2 +2 Advocacy Assistant 2007 Florida Advocacy Alert
(2007 Talking Points)
 - VII. 2 +2 Advocacy Assistant Resources
 - VIII. Sample Letter to Member or Senator Requesting Meeting
 - IX. Sample Letter to Member Requesting a Courtesy Meeting
 - X. Sample of FHIMA E-Advocacy Alert Notice to Members
-



FHIMA 2 +2 Advocacy Assistant Who We Are

II. Who We Are - FHIMA/AHIMA

- ◆ The Florida Health Information Management Association (FHIMA), consisting of over 2,700 members in 11 regions, is a component state association of the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA).
- ◆ AHIMA is the national association of health information management professionals with over 50,000 members dedicated to the effective management of personal health information needed to deliver quality healthcare to the public.
- ◆ Founded in 1928, AHIMA is committed to advancing the HIM profession in an increasingly electronic and global environment through leadership in advocacy, education, certification and lifelong learning.
- ◆ The mission of the Florida Health Information Management Association is to foster the professional development of its members and to promote privacy and quality of health information through education, communication and advocacy.

What is HIM?

- ◆ Health Information Management is a set of professional disciplines, roles, and functions that revolve around information about patients in the healthcare system.
- ◆ HIM professionals work in over 40 different settings and hold more than 200 job titles.

Job Specializations/Skills

- ◆ Work settings: Hospitals, physician offices, clinics, long-term care and skilled nursing facilities, government agencies, technical vendors, insurance companies, consulting firms and educational institutions.
- ◆ Job specializations include:
 1. Clinical data quality oversight
 2. Organizational privacy/security officer
 3. Documentation specialist responsible for monitoring accuracy and completeness of electronic and personal health records and other clinical databases.
 4. Organization wide chief information officer
 5. Information access and disclosure specialist, including release of information under HIPAA.

Workforce

- ◆ According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, each year an estimated 6,000 new HIM positions need to be filled due to industry growth and attrition.
- ◆ Currently only 2,000 new professionals are entering the profession each year.
- ◆ The Bureau predicts a 49% growth in the number of HIM workers by 2010.

- ◆ Technology will continue to play an increasingly important role in healthcare and drive the need for HIM professionals who are properly educated and positioned to work with the electronic health record.

Credentials & Education

- ◆ To ensure its members meet professional standards of excellence, AHIMA issues credentials in HIM. Following their initial certification, AHIMA members must maintain their credentials and the highest level of competency for their employers and consumers through rigorous continuing education requirements.
- ◆ Key credentials are RHIA, Registered Health Information Administrator (baccalaureate level) and RHIT, Registered Health Information Technician (associate level).
- ◆ Associate degree programs emphasize skills in health data collection and data quality, monitoring of both electronic and paper medical records, and adhering to legal and regulatory standards.
- ◆ Baccalaureate programs train at the managerial level to develop, implement and manage healthcare data collection and reporting systems; preserve patient privacy, confidentiality and security of patient health information; and ensure integrity and availability of information resources.
- ◆ Master's level programs focus on enterprise-wide administration, research, and strategic relevance and robustness of clinical data and information resources in electronic and paper formats.
- ◆ Other mastery level credentials available are: CCS, CCS-P, CHP, CHS, CHPS
- ◆ In Florida there are only 3 baccalaureate programs and 12 associate level programs.



FHIMA 2 +2 Advocacy Assistant Communication Guidelines

III. FHIMA's 2 + 2 Advocacy at Home Campaign

In an effort to increase our advocacy effectiveness at the national and local level, we have developed this resource to help you be advocates for health information management. The work AHIMA does in Washington is only a small part of the advocacy equation. Our efforts in and around Florida are essential to the progress made by our national and state associations. With major changes occurring on all levels, both national and state, we are asking you to contact your elected officials, schedule a meeting to introduce yourself and FHIMA.

FHIMA 2 + 2 Advocacy Mission

1. The members of FHIMA desire to establish a collaborative relationship with our senators and representatives on all legislative matters pertaining to health information management in the state of Florida.
2. FHIMA is asking that our members be consulted for input on any matters that pertain to health records or data management and collection requirements in our state.
3. FHIMA is calling for recognition of HIM professionals as the experts in data quality, records management and confidentiality and privacy.
4. A long-term goal of FHIMA is consideration of legislation requiring the RHIA or RHIT credentials for all individuals managing medical records departments throughout the state in all healthcare settings, including state agencies.

Communication Guidelines with Senators and Representatives

We are providing you with the guidance and materials needed to embark upon your advocacy journey. Effective advocacy does not have an end-point. The goal is building lasting relationships. Contained in this document are specific directions and resources for establishing your first contact with your elected officials and directions on how to manage beyond your initial meeting. It will also provide you with the information on the latest issues that we are confronting as health information technology, electronic health records, ICD-10 and coding consistency, privacy and nondiscrimination, security, health information management workforce and more.



2+2 Advocacy Assistant: A Brief Guide

- 1 Get to Know Your Legislators*
- 2 Do the Research*
- 3 Getting Your Message Across*
- 4 The Lobbying Visit*
- 5 Remember To Say Thanks*
- 6 Communications Checklist*
- 7 When Lobbying Doesn't Work*
- 8 Staying Informed*

1 Get to Know Your Legislators

A key to successful advocacy is to know your legislators and establishing a relationship with them. Doing your homework before contacting an elected official will help you craft your advocacy strategy and avoid political pitfalls.

As a first step, be sure you know the following about the legislators you plan to contact:

- Their political party
- The legislative committees on which they serve
- Any leadership positions they hold in the Legislature
- Their voting records on the issues that concern you
- Personal facts, such as their profession, education, organizational affiliations and civic work in the community.
- If you do not know your state representatives, look in the government section of your local telephone book. In addition, you probably know someone who does. These people may be able to offer helpful insights into legislators' areas of interest and how to best present your issue.
- Your legislators are also your neighbors. You may share many of the same interests and concerns, so make a strong effort to build on the common ground you both hold.
- Here are some tips for building a relationship with your legislators:
 - Introduce yourself to candidates and legislators at public events, such as campaign appearances and the legislative delegation meetings held each year to gain citizens' input. Give the legislator your name and contact information and let the legislator know your areas of interest and expertise.
 - Start making your legislative contacts at the local level. Arrange a meeting at your legislators' local offices well in advance of the legislative session.
 - Ask the legislator to address the FHIMA Board of Directors.
 - Invite your elected officials to present at regional and state FHIMA meetings.
 - Stay in touch. One way of doing this is to send items of interest, such as a newspaper clipping of a FHIMA success story.
 - Develop a relationship with the legislator's professional staff members, especially the legislative aide (LA) who will have the lead on your issues.
 - Legislative staff members face an incredible amount of issues that they are obliged to understand. They always appreciate people who are credible resources and who can respond to requests for help in a timely manner.
 - Attend legislative delegation meetings. Try to get on the agenda to educate legislators about issues of concern to FHIMA and the benefits that our profession provides to the community.
 - Offer your assistance in helping answer requests for information or complaints they have received involving health information management and services.
 - Develop success stories that demonstrate the good work of your organization. If a particular program or service was made possible because of a certain law and/or funding from the Legislature, include this information.

2 Do the Research

Advance research and planning is essential to effective lobbying. Before you begin your advocacy, be sure you are able to:

- Define your issue clearly. Can you state the issue in three sentences or less? If not, practice until you can.
- State the problem as well as the solution.
- For example, does the solution require a budget appropriation or a change in a current statute? Knowing this up front may determine whom you contact for support and what approach you take.
- Determine what existing statutes, rules and agency policies are relevant to your issue.
- If yours is a funding issue, be sure of your cost projections and be prepared to justify them.
- Know all sides of your issue and be able to discuss how it affects your organization, your colleagues, and your community.
- Know who your opponents are. You may be asked, and knowing who may be opposed to the issue will also enable you to be better prepared in presenting your issue.
- Identify other organizations in your area or at the state level that share your concerns and invite their participation in your advocacy efforts.
- Invite and encourage individuals served by your organization and key supporters from the community to participate in your public policy work. Their perspectives can strengthen your position. (i.e., FHA, AHCA).
- Alert these people when an important issue surfaces and provide them brief details.

3 Getting Your Message Across

Here are some useful tips for delivering your message to legislators:

- Put a human face on your proposal. Facts and figures alone will seldom convince a legislator to support an issue. Translating those facts and figures into human terms is critical to successful advocacy.
- Explain the impact of your proposal. How will what you're asking for affect the people you serve? How many people will benefit? Will your ability to deliver services improve? Will there be related savings down the line? What will happen if the action you're proposing isn't taken?
- Give a "real life" example and, if possible, have that person available to talk to your legislators, preferably during the initial lobbying visit.
- Talk in layman's terms. Avoid acronyms, abbreviations and professional "medical or legal buzz words."
- Be brief and to the point. Legislators have a host of issues to juggle and many constituents to heed. Focus on a single issue when you contact your legislator.

4 The Lobbying Visit

- Your concerns expressed simply and sincerely, can be very persuasive. If you know what the issue is and have prepared for your meeting, you'll have a distinct advantage.
- You can make a lobby visit individually or with a group. A group can demonstrate the breadth of support for your position, but it should be kept small. For example, you might arrange for another FHIMA member, who is a voting member of the legislator district, to attend with you. The foundation of the FHIMA 2 + 2 Advocacy Assistant Program was forged on this principal; that if each of our members went out 2 by 2, together we could canvas the entire state of Florida advocating our positions and getting our collective voice heard.
- When you call for an appointment with your legislator, clearly identify who you are and that you are representing the regional (i.e. Gulfcoast) Florida Health Information Management Association. Briefly explain the issue you wish to discuss with the legislator. Indicate if others will be coming with you.
- Don't try to lobby the person who answers the phone. Ask for an appointment with the legislator. If that's not possible, ask to meet with a legislative assistant.
- Try to see the legislator in his/her district office prior to the legislative session. If your visit will take place at the Capitol, call or write for an appointment as soon as you know when you are going to be in Tallahassee. And be prepared for your Capitol meeting to be a brief one, possibly preceded by a lengthy wait for the legislator. And be prepared to walk as you talk to the legislator, or even have the appointment cancelled altogether.

At the meeting:

- Stay focused. You will be more effective if you keep to the point and discuss only one issue.
- If you are making a team visit, meet with your team members prior to the meeting to discuss what information each will provide.
- Be professional and factual in your approach. Don't be argumentative. Leave your emotions parked in your car.
- Never provide a legislator with inaccurate information. If you are asked a question you can't answer, tell the legislator you will follow up with the needed information. Then be sure to do so.
- Listen closely to what your legislator/legislative aide says, especially for hints your issue isn't being understood so that you can clarify it before leaving.
- Take notes on any questions asked or follow up needed. Note the legislator/aides' responses, questions or comments.
- Ask your legislator if he or she will support your issue. State your question clearly, so that there's less ambiguity in the answer you receive. Don't say, "What do you think of our proposal?" Instead ask, "Will you introduce a bill on our behalf" or "Will you vote for this bill or issue?"
- If the answer is "No," don't be offended. Thank the legislator for spending time with you. Even if you're turned down, the legislator may look favorably on your next issue.

- Follow up with a letter thanking the legislator for the meeting. Use the letter as an opportunity to reinforce your message and, if appropriate, thank the legislator for his or her commitment of support.

5 Remember to Say Thanks

Remember to thank legislators regularly and publicly for their work, their support, and their votes. Few people remember to thank their legislators and they clearly remember those who do.

In addition to a thank you letter after a critical committee vote or when a bill has passed, find other ways to express your thanks.

Recognition at meetings, presentation of certificates or plaques or a letter to the editor praising the responsiveness of legislators to local needs can be effective public ways of saying thanks to your representatives.

6 Communications Checklist

Never underestimate the power of the written word in gaining legislators' attention. Your legislators do want and need to hear from you. One well-written and persuasive letter will stand out from the stacks that arrive at the legislator's desk each day.

Here are some guidelines for effective communications with your legislators:

- Think brevity. Limit your letter to no more than one page and e-mails to a few sentences.
- Be sure you spell your legislator's name correctly. Check the phonebook or a legislative directory if you are uncertain.
- Identify yourself as writing on behalf of your organization.
- Identify the issue or problem in the first sentence of the letter, and state your position. Example: "I am writing to ask that you support (name of bill or other measure). "I believe this proposed bill will result in positive, etc., etc."
- If you are writing in support of—or opposition to—a particular bill, include the bill number and its title. If you have Internet access, you can get the bill number, a copy of the bill, and its status via the Internet at www.myfloridahouse.gov or www.flsenate.gov
- Explain how the bill will affect the patients you serve, your business or organization.
- Support your position with a few key facts. Check any facts or figures first to be sure they are accurate.
- Limit your communication to one topic. If there is another issue of concern to you, write another letter or e-mail.
- Keep your sentences short and to the point. Translate bureaucratic or clinical terms into everyday language. Avoid acronyms or abbreviations.

- Ask the legislator for a reply to the letter to help ensure it will be read and noted. Example: "Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns. I would very much appreciate a reply indicating whether you can support this proposal."
- Sign your letter and type or print your name under it. Include your name, physical address and email address, and telephone number.
- Handwritten letters are okay. In fact, some experts say that in this day of emails and computer-generated messages, a handwritten letter may get more attention. But, please, write legibly.
- An email may be appropriate for simpler issues or providing legislators with information for their knowledge.
- Write a personalized letter to each legislator. Don't send copies of a letter addressed to one legislator to another member. Even if you repeat the body of the letter, address each letter individually.
- Be sure to tailor the letter to your FHIMA region, including local information and making it as personal as possible.
- Remember that e-mails pile up as the legislative session progresses. A personal letter will generally have more impact. If time is of the essence, send your letter by overnight mail. The extra expense may get your letter more attention.
- Address letters to members of the House of Representatives as follows: Example: The Honorable Representative Marco Rubio, Speaker of the House, 420 The Capitol, 402 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300.
- Letters to senators should be addressed: Example: Senator Ken Pruitt, President Florida Senate, Room 312, Senate Office Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100.

7 When Lobbying Doesn't Work

The old adage of "try, try again" is a good lobbyist's rule of thumb. Some longtime Florida lobbyists believe that it takes three years to get a bill passed or amended—unless the issue is one that has captured great public interest and demands immediate attention.

Don't write off a legislator who fails to support or voted against your interests. The legislator who voted down one bill may be your best ally on the next issue.

Remember, *"Stick with it. Stick with it. Some issues come up year after year. It is a fact of life in public policy-making that some things just take time. Consistent participation ... year after year, is essential to long-term success in the Legislature."*

8 Staying Informed

Here are ways you can learn about legislative issues:

- Read your local newspaper, listen to local radio news shows, and watch your local television news. Look for "Town Hall" meetings.
- Watch the Florida Channel "Today in the Legislature" on your public television station.

- Monitor legislative committee meetings and floor action via the Internet. Check the House and Senate websites for a schedule of web casts. Go to the source. The websites of the Florida House of Representatives and the Florida Senate contain timely and easily accessible information. You can obtain copies of bills and track their progress, view and download legislative calendars, obtain committee agendas and meeting packets and get information about legislators and the committees on which they serve.
- The legislative website addresses are:
 - Florida House: www.myfloridahouse.org
 - Florida Senate: www.flsenate.gov
 - Links to Congress, the White House and the Florida State Legislators:



Write to Congress or your Florida State Senator or Representative Now: [Click Here](#)

- Like to view more tips on communicating with Congress, their staff and more:



[Capitol Hill Basics](#)

Tips about communicating with Members and general information about Hill staffers, the legislative process and more.



Write to Congress Now: [Click Here](#)

2+2 Advocacy Assistant 2007 National Advocacy Alert Talking Points

V. FHIMA is Neutral on Personal Health Information (PHI) - [H.R. 1368](#)

"Personalized Health Information Act" (HR 1368) - AHIMA has not taken a legislative stance on HR1368; therefore FHIMA remains neutral on this bill at this time.

1. A complete record of a person's personal health information cannot be found in a single location. A person's health information is likely to be scattered across many health care providers in different cities, states and even countries.
2. Having access to complete and accurate medical record can be critical to ensuring timely, effective and safe treatment for patients.
3. MyPHR.com is a public resource designed to help patients understand their personal health information and the importance of creating and managing their own personal health record.
4. FHIMA desires to partner with state leadership to educate healthcare consumers about their personal health information and privacy of this information. Our national organization, AHIMA sponsors a website "My Personal Health Record" www.myphr.com which has been developed to educate consumers.

FHIMA Supports Adoption of ICD-10 Classification System - [S.628](#)

"ICD-10 - The Critical Access to Health Information Technology Act" (S. 628)

1. The current classification system, ICD-9-CM, is obsolete. Developed nearly 30 years ago, it's no longer adequate for describing the diagnoses and inpatient procedures of today.
2. The ICD-10 clinical coding system responds to the demands of healthcare in the 21st century. Adopting the system moves healthcare forward into a realm of improved quality in both health data and patient care. Ninety-nine countries have moved forward to ICD-10, leaving the US the only industrialized country not using it.
3. AHIMA supports the immediate adoption of the ICD-10 clinical coding system. To learn more about ICD-10, visit www.ahima.org/icd10/.

FHIMA Supports the Need for an Electronic Health Record

1. Accurate information is increasingly critical to address the diverse and complex issues facing the industry today, including those related to disease and injury prevention and treatment, environmental health, and public health research and surveillance.
2. The healthcare industry is in crisis and faces increasingly difficult questions related to financing, including cost control, coverage, and benefits.

3. Data is critical to the healthcare industry today as sound, accurate, available, and reliable data is the foundation of many decisions at many levels. Of primary importance is the need for data to improve patient care. Providers need data in order to treat their patients and to choose among treatments.
4. On the administrative side, payers require data to verify eligibility for treatment and determine medical necessity for care.
5. Regulators and policy makers need data to make prudent and cost-effective decisions to ensure public health and to assure the availability of healthcare services.
6. Our national organization AHIMA has assumed a leadership role in developing EHR standards and in ensuring the availability of credible, accessible, and meaningful health data.

FHIMA Supports Workforce Development - [H.R.1467](#) & [S.605](#)

"The 10,000 Trained by 2010 Act" (HR 1467) and "Allied Health Reinvestment Act"- (S. 605)

1. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, each year an estimated 6,000 new HIM positions need to be filled due to industry growth and attrition.
2. Currently only 2,000 new professionals are entering the profession each year.
3. The Bureau predicts a 49% growth in the number of HIM workers by 2010.
4. Technology will continue to play an increasingly important role in healthcare and drive the need for HIM professionals who are properly educated and positioned to work with the electronic health record.

FHIMA Supports the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act - [S.358](#) & [H.R.493](#)

"Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act" (S.358 & HR493)

1. Amends the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and the Public Health Service Act to expand the prohibition against discrimination by group health plans and health insurance issuers in the group and individual markets on the basis of genetic information or services to prohibit: (1) enrollment and premium discrimination based on information about a request for or receipt of genetic services; and (2) requiring genetic testing. Sets forth penalties for violations.
2. Amends title XVIII (Medicare) of the Social Security Act to prohibit issuers of Medicare supplemental policies from discriminating on the basis of genetic information. Extends medical privacy and confidentiality rules to the disclosure of genetic information. Makes it an unlawful employment practice for an employer, employment agency, labor organization, or training program to discriminate against an individual or deprive such individual of employment opportunities because of genetic information. Prohibits the collection and disclosure of genetic information, with certain exceptions.
3. Establishes a Genetic Nondiscrimination Study Commission to review the developing science of genetics and advise Congress on the advisability of providing for a disparate impact cause of action under this Act.



Write to Congress or Your Florida State
Senator or Representative Now: [Click Here](#)

2+2 Advocacy Assistant 2007 Florida Advocacy Alert Talking Points

VI. FHIMA Supports the Florida Health Information Network (FHIN) [H 1123](#), [CS/H 1121](#), [S 2252](#), [CS/S 2348](#), [S 2350](#), [S 2582](#)

1. FHIMA supports the creation of the Florida Health Information Network (FHIN) and we support the 2007 Florida state legislation.
2. The FHIN is a term used to describe a public and private initiative to create a statewide Florida health information network for the transmission of electronic health information among physicians, hospitals and other authorized entities.
3. The health information network is the infrastructure for the secure transmission of electronic health records among the various organizations participating in the network.
4. The expected benefits which will be realized as physicians and other providers begin to use the network. The FHIN will give providers the technological means to improve health care outcomes by enabling better coordination of care with other providers. It will provide access to vital medical records in an emergency or natural disaster. Patients will be able to track their own progress by either accessing their personal health record (PHR) through the FHIN or obtaining FHIN reports (designed for patients) from their physician.
5. The FHIN is proposed to operate as a decentralized system that enables health information to be exchanged through the network, which transmits the information in a secure manner. Local health information will continue to be maintained and controlled by the health care providers that create the records.
6. The purpose of creating the FHIN is to facilitate access to health information by those health care providers who are currently permitted access by law. The FHIN would be subject to HIPAA (federal regulations related to covered health care entities) and other federal and state laws and regulations related to the confidentiality of medical records and restrictions imposed regarding the release of medical records. The FHIN and its participating providers will be subject to the requirements in law for obtaining patient consent. The FHIN will also create an audit trail and the audit report would be made available to providers and patients.
7. The FHIN Corporation will be responsible for guiding the development of the FHIN. It will encourage growth of local health information networks and promote an integrated approach to the development of the FHIN. It will specify technical standards and policies for the security of the network. By enacting

the FHIN Corporation in statute, the Corporation and its governing Board will be held accountable to the general public, required to hold public meetings, and subject to public records requests. The FHIN Board would be appointed by the Governor and other public officials. In addition, the legislation will specify the duties and responsibilities of the FHIN Corporation (such as fund raising, advising the Agency).

FHIMA Supports Amending FS 395.3025

"Section 395.3025, Florida Statutes, Patient and personnel records; copies; examination"

1. FHIMA supports amending FS 395.3025 -The Florida state statute governing patient and personnel records; copies; examination, making Florida state law compliant with HIPAA.
2. FHIMA supports the Agency for Healthcare Administration's Privacy and Security initiatives three year plan to consolidate Florida state statutes in this area.



Write to Congress or Your Florida State
Senator or Representative Now: [Click Here](#)

2+2 Advocacy Assistant Resources

- VI. How do you embark on this effort? Well, follow these simple directions:
1. Send an introductory letter to your newly elected officials:
 - a. Use the draft model letter provided and modify/personalize it how you feel is necessary. For letter guidance, feel free to use the "Letter Writing Guidelines" in the Resource Center of the Advocacy Assistant at https://secure.ahima.org/DC/AA/resources_tools.asp.
 - b. Look up the address of your Congressman/Senator in the Advocacy Assistant at <https://secure.ahima.org/DC/Login.asp>. Find the office closest to your place of work or home and send the letter there.
 2. After two weeks, give the office a call to follow-up on your letter and to schedule a meeting with the elected official or their local staff member.
 - a. Nervous about making a call? You can use the "Telephone Guidelines" in the Resource Center of the Advocacy Assistant at https://secure.ahima.org/DC/AA/resources_tools.asp.
 3. Attend meetings.
 - a. You have never done this before? Don't sweat it! Use the "Meeting Guidelines" in the Resource Center of the Advocacy Assistant at https://secure.ahima.org/DC/AA/resources_tools.asp.
 - b. Provide an information packet. Materials can be found in the Resource Center of the Advocacy Assistant at https://secure.ahima.org/DC/AA/resources_tools.asp under "Samples" and "Packet Materials."
 - c. The packet should contain:
 1. Information about AHIMA and your CSA
 2. AHIMA's Key Advocacy Issue's paper, position statements and other helpful materials/articles/brochures
 3. Schedule of local association events
 4. If applicable, provide an invitation for them to speak at or attend a local association event.
 4. Complete your follow-up
 - a. Once your meeting is done, complete your follow-up.

- b. Send a thank you letter to the individual that you met with reminding them of your conversation and any commitments made by either party.
 - c. Complete any commitments you may have made as providing additional information, sending a letter of support and so on.
5. Stay in touch
- a. Your conversation and relationship with policymakers and their staff does not have to end with just one meeting.
 - b. Invite them to events
 - c. Put them on your mailing lists for newsletters and other publication
 - d. Call them when new issues arrive.

As mentioned previously, your participation is critical to the overall effectiveness of FHIMA's 2 + 2 Advocacy effort. It is your insight, experience, and knowledge that provides us with the best opportunities to influence any and all potential policies affecting HIM.

If we can provide you with any additional assistance please do not hesitate to contact Carolyn Glavan at fhima@infionline.net. Thank you and good luck!



Sample Letter
To Member or Senator Requesting Meeting

Your Address
Hometown, USA

Date

The Honorable Senator Ken Pruitt
Room 400
Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL
32399-1100

Regarding: HR 111, the Health Data Quality Act

Dear Senator Pruitt:

I am writing to inquire about your availability for a meeting to discuss your recently introduced legislation HR 111, the Health Data Quality Act. As a member of the Florida Health Information Management Association (FHIMA), our 2700 members are vitally interested in HR 111 and any other legislation which may have an impact on health information issues.

FHIMA is the Florida component state association of our national organization, the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). As experts in clinical data and information management, the 45,000 professional members of AHIMA are vital to the healthcare industry. The unique knowledge and skills that AHIMA members possess are critical for classifying and analyzing health information, transitioning from paper to computer-based medical records, and enhancing data quality—all accomplished while maintaining patient confidentiality and information security. With a 75-year tradition of advancing quality healthcare through quality information, AHIMA is also instrumental in developing industry standards, advocating relevant legislation, and providing education in health information.

I will contact your office on (give 5-7 days) to discuss your availability. We look forward to working with you on HR 111. In the meantime, if I can provide you with any information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (your phone number).

Sincerely,
Your Name
Your Title



Sample Letter
To Member Requesting a Courtesy Meeting

Your Address
Hometown, USA

Date

The Honorable Senator Ken Pruitt
Room 400
Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL
32399-1100

Dear Senator Pruitt:

I am writing to inquire about your availability for a meeting to discuss the Florida Health Information Management Association (FHIMA) and those issues important to our more than 2700 members. The Health Subcommittee, of which you are a member, maintains primary jurisdiction over the issues relevant to health information management professionals.

FHIMA is the Florida component state association of our national organization, the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). As experts in clinical data and information management, the 45,000 professional members of AHIMA are vital to the healthcare industry. The unique knowledge and skills that AHIMA members possess are critical for classifying and analyzing health information, transitioning from paper to computer-based medical records, and enhancing data quality—all accomplished while maintaining patient confidentiality and information security. With a 75-year tradition of advancing quality healthcare through quality information, AHIMA is also instrumental in developing industry standards, advocating relevant legislation, and providing education in health information.

I will contact your office on (give 5-7 days) to discuss your availability. We look forward to working with you on those issues affecting health information management professionals. In the meantime, if I can provide you with any information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (your phone number).

Sincerely,

Your Name
Your Title



Sample of
FHIMA E-Advocacy Alert
Notice to Members:

All FHIMA members are asked to send an e-mail to each of the Florida Senators comprising the Senate Government Operations Committee in support of Senate Bill 2348C1 by Wednesday, April 18, 2007.

Florida Senate Bill Analysis Snapshots:

SB 2348C1 - Fla. Health Information Network Act [SPCC]

Last Event: On Committee agenda for Committee on Governmental Operations, 04/18/07, 2:15 pm, 110-S

SB 2348C1 requires the Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA) to develop & implement plan for formation & operation of health information network; requires agency to enter into contract to implement plan; creates Fla. Health Information Network, Inc., as not-for-profit corp.; provides for board of directors & duties & responsibilities of corporation; requires report to Governor & Legislature; provides for certain funds & assets to revert to state upon dissolution of network, etc. Creates 408.064. EFFECTIVE DATE: 07/01/2007.

FHIMA Member

Instructions:

FHIMA members are asked to cut and paste the following message and e-mail it to each of the Florida Senators listed below:

"VOTE YES for SB2348C1. The Florida Health Information Management Association (FHIMA) consisting of over 2,700 members in 11 Florida regions supports Senate Bill 2348C1."

Florida Senate Committee on Government Operations:

Instructions:

Senator member page links and their individual e-mail addresses are provided below. The first link provides the name of the Senator connecting you to their member page. The second link provides you with the Senator's individual e-mail address.

- **Chair:** [Senator Alfred "Al" Lawson, Jr. \(D\)](#); **E-mail:** lawson.alfred.web@flsenate.gov
- **Vice Chair:** [Senator Bill Posey \(R\)](#); **E-mail:** posey.bill.web@flsenate.gov

- [Senator Nancy Argenziano \(R\)](#); **E-mail:** argenziano.nancy.web@flsenate.gov
- [Senator James E. "Jim" King, Jr. \(R\)](#); **E-mail:** king.james.web@flsenate.gov
- [Senator Steve Oelrich \(R\)](#); **E-mail:** oelrich.steve.web@flsenate.gov
- [Senator Frederica S. Wilson \(D\)](#); **E-mail:** [Senator Frederica S. Wilson \(D\)](mailto:Senator Frederica S. Wilson (D)@flsenate.gov)