

ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL (AHPC)
GHANA HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



NATIONAL STANDARDS OF PRACTICE
FOR
HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS IN GHANA

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Foreword

The effective functioning of Ghana's health system depends on the availability of high-quality, reliable, timely, and actionable health information. Health Information Management (HIM) professionals play a central role in ensuring that data generated across the continuum of care are properly collected, managed, analyzed, and used for clinical care, public health surveillance, planning, and decision-making.

The Allied Health Professions Council (AHPC), in collaboration with the Ghana Health Information Management Association (GHIMA) and key stakeholders, has developed these National Standards of Practice for Health Information Management Professionals in Ghana to guide professional practice and ensure consistency, accountability, and quality in health information services across all levels of the health system.

These standards define the expected level of performance for HIM professionals and establish benchmarks for regulation, supervision, training, and continuous professional development. They are aligned with national health policies, digital health strategies, and global best practices.

All HIM professionals are expected to adhere to these standards in discharging their duties to strengthen Ghana's health system and improve population health outcomes.

Registrar

Allied Health Professions Council (AHPC)

President

Ghana Health Information Management Association (GHIMA)

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- Ministry of Health (MoH)
- Ghana Health Service (GHS) – Center for Health Information Management (CHIM)
- Teaching Hospitals and Regional Health Directorates
- Development partners and technical experts
- Health Information Officers, Biostatisticians, Records Officers, and frontline health workers

Special recognition goes to professionals and institutions whose experience in DHIS2 implementation, data quality improvement, disease surveillance, and digital health innovations informed these standards.

1. Introduction

Health Information Management (HIM) is an essential component of Ghana's healthcare system, ensuring that health data is meticulously collected, processed, stored, analyzed, and utilized effectively for informed decision-making. In a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape, HIM serves as the backbone for delivering high-quality healthcare services and improving population health outcomes. Despite substantial investments in digital health systems such as the District Health Information Management System (DHIMS2) and other electronic health records (EHRs), various challenges persist. These challenges encompass data quality issues, underutilization of available data, governance concerns, and interoperability challenges across different health information systems. As a response to these persistent issues, a set of comprehensive standards has been developed to address the following key objectives:

Promote Uniformity and Quality in HIM Practices

Establishing standardized processes and protocols to ensure that health information is consistently managed across various healthcare settings, which in turn enhances the reliability of data for clinical, public health and administrative purposes.

Strengthen Data Governance and Accountability

Implementing frameworks that define roles and responsibilities regarding data management, ensuring that there are clear accountability and oversight in how health data is handled and safeguarded.

Support Evidence-Based Decision-Making

Facilitating access to accurate and timely health information to enable healthcare providers and policymakers to make informed decisions that are grounded in solid evidence, thus improving patient care and health services.

Enhance Professional Regulation and Supervision

Promoting the development of regulatory guidelines and professional standards that ensure HIM practitioners are adequately trained and supervised, thereby fostering a skilled workforce capable of navigating complex health information systems.

By focusing on these objectives, the HIM standards aim to create a more effective and reliable health information ecosystem in Ghana, ultimately leading to better healthcare delivery and improved health outcomes for all citizens.

2. Purpose of Standards

These standards aim at:

- Define minimum acceptable levels of practice for HIM professionals
- Guide regulation and licensing by AHPC
- Provide a framework for training, supervision, and performance assessment
- Promote data quality, integrity, and ethical use of health information

3. Scope Of Application

These standards apply to:

- Health Information Assistants/Officers/Manager
- Biostatisticians
- Medical Records Officers
- Data Managers
- Monitoring & Evaluation Officers
- Digital Health and DHIS2 Officers

Across:

- Public and private health facilities
- District, regional, and national levels
- NGOs and development partner-supported programs

4. Guiding Principles

HIM practice in Ghana shall be guided by:

- Confidentiality and Privacy
- Accuracy and Integrity
- Timeliness
- Completeness
- Accountability
- Ethical Use
- Professionalism
- Equity and Inclusiveness
- Data Use for Action

5. Core Standards of Practice

Standard 1: Health Data Collection and Documentation

HIM professionals shall ensure accurate, complete, timely, and standardized collection and documentation of health data.

Key Requirements:

- Use approved registers, tools, and electronic systems
- Ensure completeness and legibility of records
- Enforce adherence to reporting timelines

Indicators:

- $\geq 95\%$ data completeness
- $\geq 90\%$ reporting timeliness
- Error rate $< 5\%$

Standard 2: Health Records Management

Health records should be securely stored, easily retrievable, and maintained throughout their lifecycle.

Key Requirements:

- Implement filing systems (manual/electronic)
- Ensure records security and controlled access
- Maintain retention and archiving protocols

Indicators:

- Record retrieval time <10 minutes
- 100% compliance with national records storage protocols

Standard 3: Data Quality Assurance

HIM professionals shall implement routine data quality checks and validation processes.

Key Requirements:

- Conduct monthly data validation meetings
- Perform data verification at the facility level
- Provide feedback to data producers

Indicators:

- Monthly Data Quality Assessment (DQA) conducted in all facilities
- $\geq 90\%$ data consistency across sources

Standard 4: Health Information Reporting and Use

Health data shall be analyzed, interpreted, and used for decision-making at all levels.

Key Requirements:

- Generate routine reports (monthly, quarterly)
- Conduct data review meetings
- Support evidence-based planning

Indicators:

- $\geq 80\%$ of facilities/units conduct monthly data review meetings
- Documented action points from data reviews

Standard 5: Disease Surveillance and Public Health Reporting

HIM professionals shall support timely and accurate disease surveillance reporting.

Key Requirements:

- Ensure IDSR reporting compliance
- Support outbreak detection and response
- Maintain surveillance databases

Indicators:

- $\geq 95\%$ IDSR reporting completeness
- Zero delay in epidemic reporting

Standard 6: Digital Health And Information Systems

HIM professionals shall ensure effective use and management of digital health systems.

Key Requirements:

- Manage DHIMS2/Other EHRs platforms
- Ensure system uptime and data synchronization
- Train users on digital tools

Indicators:

- $\geq 95\%$ system uptime
- $\geq 90\%$ user compliance with data entry protocols

Standard 7: Data Protection and Confidentiality

Health information shall be protected from unauthorized access, disclosure, or misuse.

Key Requirements:

- Implement access control systems

- Ensure compliance with data protection laws
- Train staff on confidentiality

Indicators:

- Zero reported data breaches
- 100% of staff trained on data protection

Standard 8: Classification, Coding, and Statistical Reporting

Standardized classification systems should be used for coding and reporting.

Key Requirements:

- Use ICD classification systems
- Ensure accurate coding of diagnoses
- Maintain statistical records

Indicators:

- $\geq 95\%$ coding accuracy

Standard 9: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Analytics

HIM professionals shall support monitoring, evaluation, and advanced data analytics.

Key Requirements:

- Develop dashboards and analytics reports
- Support program evaluations
- Use GIS and statistical tools

Indicators:

- Availability of dashboards at the facility/district/regional level

Standard 10: Research And Data Use

HIM professionals shall support ethical research and data-driven innovation.

Key Requirements:

- Provide data for research under approved protocols
- Ensure ethical clearance compliance

Standard 11: Leadership And Capacity Building

Standard Statement:

HIM professionals shall provide leadership in data management and build staff capacity.

Key Requirements:

- Conduct training and mentorship
- Supervise data management activities

Indicators:

- Minimum of 2 trainings in a year
- Minimum 90% HIM professionals trained

Standard 12: Professional Ethics and Continuous Development

HIM professionals shall uphold ethical standards and engage in continuous learning.

Key Requirements:

- Adhere to the HIM Professional code of ethics
- Participate in CPD programs

Indicators:

- Minimum 90% HIM professionals trained

6. Implementation Framework

6.1 Institutional Roles

- AHPC: Regulation, licensing, enforcement
- GHIMA: Professional development, advocacy
- MoH: Policy implementation and supervision

- Facilities/Districts: Operationalization

6.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

- Routine supervision and audits
- Annual performance assessments
- Data Quality Index (DQI) tracking

6.3 Compliance and Enforcement

- Mandatory adherence for licensed professionals
- Sanctions for non-compliance
- Integration into performance appraisal systems

6.4 Capacity Building

- Regular training programs
- Certification and re-licensing requirements
- Integration into academic curricula

7. Conclusion

The adoption of these standards marks a significant milestone in strengthening Ghana's health information systems. By ensuring adherence to these standards, HIM professionals will enhance data quality, improve decision-making, and contribute to better health outcomes.

8. Glossary

- HIM: Health Information Management
- DHIS2: District Health Information Software 2
- IDSR: Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response
- DQA: Data Quality Assessment
- DQI: Data Quality Index
- ICD: International Classification of Diseases

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