

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



Code of Conduct/Ethics
for
Health Information Management Professionals in Ghana

Draft

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Code of Conduct/Ethics for Health Information Management Professionals in Ghana

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Forward

The Allied Health Professions Council (AHPC), established under the Health Professions Regulatory Bodies Act, 2013 (Act 857), is mandated to regulate allied health professions in Ghana and ensure the highest standards of professional practice, ethics, and accountability in the delivery of healthcare services.

In an era when health information is central to healthcare delivery, disease surveillance, policy formulation, research, and strategic decision-making, the role of Health Information Management (HIM) professionals has become increasingly indispensable. HIM professionals serve as custodians of health data and are entrusted with ensuring accuracy, confidentiality, integrity, accessibility, and lawful use of health information within the healthcare system.

This Code of Ethics has therefore been developed to provide a comprehensive ethical and professional framework to guide the conduct, behaviour, and responsibilities of Health Information Management professionals in Ghana. The document outlines the standards expected of practitioners in managing patient and health service information across public and private healthcare institutions.

The Council recognizes that ethical practice is fundamental to maintaining public trust and safeguarding the rights, dignity, and privacy of patients. This Code seeks to promote professionalism, accountability, transparency, and adherence to national laws and international best practices relating to health information management and data protection.

The AHPC commends the Ghana Health Information Management Association (GHIMA), stakeholders within the health sector, academic institutions, and all professionals who contributed to the development of this important document. Their dedication and expertise have ensured that this Code reflects the evolving demands of modern health information systems and the broader national health agenda.

The Council urges all Health Information Management professionals to familiarize themselves with the provisions of this Code and uphold its principles in the discharge of their duties. Compliance with these ethical standards will strengthen the health system, improve the quality of healthcare delivery, and enhance confidence in Ghana's health information management practices.

It is our expectation that this Code will serve not only as a regulatory guide but also as a source of professional inspiration for current and future practitioners.

Ministry of Health, Republic of Ghana

Registrar

Allied Health Professions Council (AHPC)

President

Ghana Health Information Management Association (GHIMA)

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The Council further acknowledges the invaluable contributions of the Ministry of Health, Ghana Health Service, academic institutions, healthcare facilities, regulatory bodies, development partners, and practicing Health Information Management professionals whose expertise and practical experiences informed the development of this document.

We also appreciate the technical input from stakeholders in health information systems, digital health, medical records management, data governance, monitoring and evaluation, and health service administration, whose recommendations enriched the quality and relevance of this Code.

The Council remains committed to promoting professionalism, ethical practice, accountability, and excellence in Health Information Management in Ghana.

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Accountability	The obligation of a professional to take responsibility for actions, decisions, and outcomes related to their duties.
Confidentiality	The protection of patient and health information from unauthorized disclosure or access.
Continuous Professional Development (CPD)	Ongoing education and professional learning activities undertaken to maintain and improve professional competence.
Data Integrity	The accuracy, consistency, completeness, and reliability of data throughout its lifecycle.
Data Protection	Measures and legal requirements aimed at safeguarding personal and sensitive information from misuse or unauthorized access.
Electronic Health Record (EHR)	A digital version of a patient's medical and health information maintained electronically.
Ethical Practice	Professional conduct guided by accepted moral principles, standards, and values.
Health Information	Data related to an individual's physical or mental health, healthcare services, or health status.
Health Information Management (HIM)	The practice of acquiring, analyzing, protecting, and managing health information to support healthcare delivery and decision-making.
HIM Professional	A trained and qualified individual engaged in the management of health information and medical records.
Integrity	Adherence to honesty, truthfulness, and ethical principles in professional practice.
Medical Record	A documented account of a patient's medical history, diagnosis, treatment, and care.
Privacy	The right of individuals to control access to their personal and health information.
Professional Misconduct	Behaviour or actions that violate professional standards, ethical principles, or legal requirements.
Record Keeping	The systematic creation, maintenance, storage, retrieval, and disposal of records.

Stakeholder	Any individual, organization, or institution with an interest in health information management practices or outcomes.
Unauthorized Access	Access to information, records, or systems without proper approval or permission.
Health Data Governance	The framework of policies, standards, and procedures for managing health data responsibly and securely.

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1. Preamble

Health Information Management (HIM) professionals play a critical role in ensuring the collection, management, security, and use of health data to support patient care, public health, research, and policy-making in Ghana.

This Code of Conduct establishes the ethical principles, professional standards, and expected behaviours for all HIM practitioners working within the Ghanaian health system, including public and private sectors.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Ethics for Health Information Management professionals is to provide a clear framework that guides ethical behaviour, integrity, and accountability in the management of health data. It protects patient privacy and confidentiality, promotes the responsible and lawful use of health information, and builds trust in the health system by safeguarding the accuracy and credibility of data. The code also supports professional decision-making in complex situations, prevents misconduct such as data manipulation or unauthorized disclosure, and provides a basis for regulation and disciplinary action.

3. Core Ethical Principles

3.1 Confidentiality

HIM professionals shall protect patient information from unauthorized access or disclosure, use data strictly for legitimate, authorized purposes, and maintain confidentiality even after termination/separation from employment.

3.2 Integrity

HIM Professionals shall ensure accuracy, completeness, and reliability of health data. They shall avoid falsification, manipulation, or misrepresentation of records, ensure prompt reporting of errors, and take corrective action.

3.3 Professional Competence

HIM Professionals shall maintain high standards of knowledge and skills, engage in Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and apply best practices in health information management

3.4 Accountability

HIM Professionals shall take responsibility for actions and decisions, comply with institutional policies and national regulations, and be answerable to patients, employers, and regulatory bodies

3.5 Honesty

HIM Professionals shall be truthful, sincere, and forthright in practice.

3.6 Respect for Persons

HIM Professionals shall treat all patients and colleagues with dignity and respect, and ensure equitable handling of information regardless of background.

4. Professional Responsibilities

4.1 Data Management

HIM professionals shall:

- Ensure accurate data collection, coding, storage, retrieval,
- Maintain standardized classification systems and
- Promote data quality assurance practices

4.2 Data Security and Privacy

HIM Professionals shall:

- Implement appropriate safeguards for both paper and electronic records
- Prevent unauthorized access, breaches, or data loss
- Adhere to national data protection laws (Act 843) and institutional policies

4.3 Ethical Use of Health Information

HIM Professionals shall:

- Use data only for approved clinical, administrative, or research purposes
- Obtain necessary approvals for data sharing
- Ensure anonymization where required

4.4 Record Keeping

HIM Professionals shall:

- Maintain complete, timely, and accessible records
- Ensure proper documentation and archiving
- Safeguard records against damage or loss

5. Professional Conduct

5.1 Workplace Behavior

- Demonstrate honesty, professionalism, and teamwork
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Respect institutional hierarchies and protocols

5.2 Collaboration

- Work effectively with healthcare providers, administrators, and IT personnel
- Support interdisciplinary teamwork for improved health outcomes

5.3 Communication

- Communicate clearly and responsibly
- Avoid unauthorized disclosure of sensitive information
- Provide accurate information for decision-making

6. Prohibited Conduct

HIM professionals shall not:

- Access patient records without authorization
- Disclose confidential information inappropriately
- Alter or falsify health records
- Use health data for personal gain
- Engage in any form of corruption or misconduct

7. Compliance with Laws and Regulations

HIM professionals must comply with:

- National health policies and guidelines
- Data protection and privacy laws in Ghana
- Institutional policies and professional standards

8. Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

- Participate in training, workshops, and certification programs
- Stay updated on emerging technologies and best practices
- Contribute to research and innovation in health information management

9. Reporting and Accountability

- Report unethical practices or breaches promptly
- Cooperate with investigations
- Uphold transparency and integrity in all professional activities

10. Enforcement

Failure to comply with this Code may result in:

- Disciplinary action by employers
- Sanctions by professional bodies
- Legal consequences where applicable

11. Commitment to National Health Agenda

HIM professionals shall:

- Support national health priorities
- Promote data-driven decision-making
- Contribute to improving healthcare quality and outcomes in Ghana

12. Conclusion

This Code of Conduct provides a framework for ensuring that Health Information Management professionals in Ghana uphold the highest standards of ethics, professionalism, and accountability.

By adhering to this Code, HIM professionals contribute to:

- Trust in the healthcare system
- Improved patient care
- Strengthened health systems

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