



Health Information Technology Field

**A REPORT FROM NOVA
SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY'S
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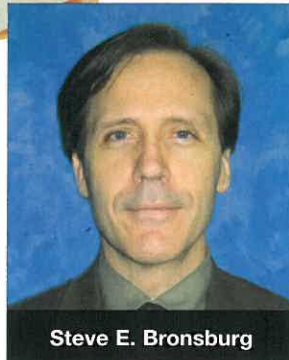
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Health information technology (HIT) is an emerging field due to rapid advances in communication and information technologies. HIT bridges the gap between information technology and health care. The term health information technology is often interchangeable with biomedical informatics, medical informatics or health informatics in literature.

HIT professionals work in many facets of the health care sector. Examples of career options include chief medical information officers, chief nursing information officers and project managers who all manage health information technology in health care organizations; implementation specialists who focus on implementing electronic health records (EHRs); clinical research scientists who work with biomedical data, information and knowledge in clinical decision support systems; clinical HIT evaluators; and trainers/educators.

Today, the health care system is facing uncontrollably high cost, mounting patient safety concerns, rapid growth of health data and information, and slow adoption and utilization of information technology in the health care field. In addition, there is a severe shortage of adequately trained HIT professionals.

The federal government has recognized the need to move forward in this field and has passed national policy creating resources to implement EHRs and to train an HIT workforce. In 2009 the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act was adopted with the goal of improving the nation's health through the use of HIT. In addition, the federal government's stimulus package earmarked \$19 billion to implement EHRs and to train a competent HIT workforce. According to Don E. Detmer, then president and chief executive of the American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA), these new policies have created an estimated need of an additional 70,000 health informatics professionals by 2014.

A recent study by the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives shows that 67 percent of respondents want to hire HIT workers, yet these chief medical informatics officers [CMIOs] are concerned that there is a shortage of adequately trained HIT recruits. CMIOs responded that they want workers to have specialized knowledge in HIT and its applications. The Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) states that during 2013 there will be a vast increase in the need for trained individuals who can design, implement and analyze HIT systems. Those with experience

and a solid education and/or credentials in the field will quickly fill open positions for HIT implementation specialists, data analysts, clinical project managers, etc. Average salaries of HIT professionals as reported by the more than 2,200 respondents to the 2010 HIMSS Compensation Survey range from \$70,933 to \$169,826, varying widely based on region, professional level and the employing organization's primary business.

There are a number of different options of study to prepare for a career transition to the HIT field. AMIA, the professional home for HIT education and research in the U.S., provides a comprehensive listing of academic programs throughout the country. ★

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