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AHIOS Updates Certificate Program to Promote Excellence in the Release of Patient Information

*—Certification is the Gold Standard for Measuring Mastery of Health Information
Management Fundamentals —*

BOSTON, Mass., August 5, 2008 — The Association of Health Information Outsourcing Services (AHIOS) has recently updated its rigorous exam that tests its member employees' knowledge about how to protect the confidentiality of patients' personal health information when that information is released to requestors.

An employee who receives a passing grade of 80 percent or higher will receive the designation of Certified Release of Information Specialist (CRIS), which indicates mastery of the field of release of information (ROI).

ROI specialists handle the complex and time-consuming task of releasing health information to a variety of requestors, including insurance companies, government review and regulatory agencies, researchers, attorneys and patients. ROI specialists must log, verify and track requests; retrieve information from multiple locations and in many different formats; confirm the requestor has authorized access to the information; then reproduce and send the documents. A critical part of the process is determining the minimum information necessary to meet the request so that sensitive information is not needlessly released.

“The majority of healthcare providers outsource this complex but necessary function to ensure they have access to staff with quality control, technology and healthcare expertise,” explained Bonnie Coffey, president of AHIOS and CM Information Specialists.

“The CRIS designation is a testament to one's understanding of the complexities and risks associated with ROI and their ability to ensure that only authorized requestors see only the information they're authorized to see,” explained Mariela Twiggs, CRIS Chairperson and CEO of MTT Enterprises, LLC/VELFILE. “In the ROI industry, a thorough understanding of the

level of privacy and security of health information is essential, and this designation illustrates that.”

The written exam includes a broad range of questions, covering the contents of a medical record to the components of a valid authorization for a record’s release. The largest section of the exam asks test takers what they would do when presented with a wide variety of hypothetical situations. The test is available to AHIOS member organizations and is free for them to administer.

About the Association of Health Information Outsourcing Services

Established in 1996, AHIOS promotes, strengthens and enhances the health information management outsourcing industry while ensuring excellence in the handling and dissemination of confidential patient-identifiable information. Its goals are to increase awareness of the value, importance and complexity of the industry’s services; establish standards of excellence for the industry of health information management outsourcing; pursue fair and equitable treatment of the industry through legislative, regulatory and legal processes; and create educational and networking opportunities for members.

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