As the professional home for biomedical and health informaticians, AMIA works actively to support high quality relevant professional education and research opportunities. This issue of JAMIA presents two key documents that provide tangible evidence of progress on this front. In this editorial, we describe the context and specific purpose of the two documents, how they were developed, and AMIA’s plans to build upon the documents.


In March 2007, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded a grant to the American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) to support the development of the two documents that the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) would require to create the medical subspecialty of clinical informatics. Two interdisciplinary teams commissioned by the AMIA Board created the two documents, the Core Content and Program Training Requirements for clinical informatics, which were endorsed by the AMIA Board. The documents are presented in this issue. While the grant focused on the development of the medical subspecialty of clinical informatics, it also provided AMIA with valuable insight in delineating core content and training requirements for clinical informatics in general. The nature of these documents also forced AMIA to clearly state the boundaries of clinical informatics, and to establish expectations for how clinical informaticians should be trained.

Each of the two teams that AMIA established met three times. A consultant with extensive experience in developing similar documents for other medical subspecialties advised the teams’ work. A professional editor prepared the documents based on the teams’ deliberations. AMIA invited review of draft documents by its members, health-related federal agency personnel, and representatives of other clinical and informatics-focused organizations. They examined the open process served AMIA well. The teams reviewed each comment received. The feedback informed and sharpened the teams’ deliberations and helped to shape the final version of the two documents.

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matics. Notably, the team did not limit itself to what current informatics training programs offer and focused instead on what training programs should offer. In addition to identifying the kinds of resources offered by clinical informatics training programs during the course of the study, the team sought to establish requirements that would accommodate creative approaches to providing quality training (e.g., partnering with a business school to offer courses in leadership). While the training requirements provide guidance about the kinds of experiences that fellows should have, they allow flexibility in how programs structure those experiences.

In Nov 2008, the AMIA Board of Directors approved the Core Content and Training Program Requirements for clinical informatics. AMIA has actively contacted member boards of the ABMS to formally establish the subspecialty of clinical informatics. In the meantime, an active dialogue within AMIA’s Academic Forum focuses on the adjustments that training programs will need to have ready for the anticipated future of certification in clinical informatics.

Certification is often followed by accreditation. AMIA will be discussing accreditation issues in the months ahead.

With completion of these two documents, AMIA turned to the issue of clinical informatics certification for other members of the clinical team through the Advanced Inter-professional Informatics Certification Initiative. These two documents will provide a starting point for discussion for two new committees that will develop the core content and common training requirements for the inter-professional practice of clinical informatics.

Those engaged in the process of elucidating the core content and outlining the training requirements for clinical informatics as a subspecialty felt that they were making history. This fostered a high level of enthusiasm and deep commitment to producing excellent work. We believe that the public will be well served by their successful efforts. Time will tell if our collective endeavors meet our own and others’ expectations.