

Preface

It has been nine years since publication of the Second Edition of *Healthcare Information Management Systems: A Practical Guide*. In computer time, nine years is six lifetimes of computers, given that computers are replaced every 18 months. Not only has the technology itself changed, but so have the economics of computing, the planning process of system implementation, and the human–computer interaction. On the healthcare side, change has been omnipresent with events such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), cost-based proposals such as Medicare reform, the development of strategies for disease management, and managed care reform. When one considers changes that have occurred in the integration of information technology and health care, more wonders appear—the use of personal digital assistants to track patient progress, online patient registration, electronic medical records that patients can access from home, technology as an enabler to quality health care, and healthcare providers who work in a paperless environment. So comparing this edition to the second one, only six chapter topics are based on the same concepts. In a sense, this is the first edition of an entire new philosophy of healthcare computing. But given the dynamics of the current healthcare environment, it will enjoy the same success of the first two editions, if not more.

In the past nine years, new roles have emerged in healthcare computing. No longer is the chief information officer the only player. In today's healthcare environment, other team members have made their appearances, such as the nurse informatician, compliance officer, health information administrator, medical technology officer, security officer, network developer, multimedia coordinator, project manager, technology planner, systems analyst, and the future of health informatics—the student—and the faculties that build that future. All these essential players will benefit from this book. In addition, in recognition of the global character of health care, this book also conveys an international flavor with case studies taken from several corners of the world.

Think about what is involved in either upgrading your present healthcare information systems or embarking on an initiative to explore new technologies. First, you need to develop a plan, perhaps with the help of consultants, and devise a strategy to exercise that plan. In doing so, you can talk to those who have accomplished something similar, either in your country or abroad, and you can review case studies that tie theory to practice. Your journey may not be without obstacles; thus, those who have come before you can provide tried and true lessons from which to learn. This is the premise of Section 1, Chapters 1 to 6. Section 2, Chapters 7 to 11, recognizes that the plan is well underway, but that it must exist within an organizational structure. This section discusses how the organization readies itself for change. It must consider organizational

politics, ethics, decision factors, culture, and change agents. Without a thorough analysis of these factors, the healthcare information management system will not ingrain itself into the organization, and, thus, optimal benefits will not be realized. Given this book's theory to practice approach, you will be taken precisely through the steps needed to accomplish this. And this is done in Section 3, through the eyes and minds of those who have lived the experience—the Chief Information Officers and their staffs. Chapters 12 through 22 in this section, convey the “worker bee’s” perspective in terms of what it actually takes to transform an organization via information technology and what is actually involved in managing implementation. At times the scenarios may seem futuristic, but these experiences are actually happening, and the dissemination and duplication of sophisticated healthcare information systems is a reality. The reader will notice, however, that there are no guarantees or promises of success; rather, one must be daring to confront and overcome obstacles, politics, and culture.

As the book progresses to Section 4, you will become immersed in the utilization and consequences of information technology across the continuum of care. HIPAA, outcomes management, the electronic health record, patient safety, medical errors, pharmacy delivery systems, and so on will showcase just how technology is an enabler in health care. Although the content of the whole book revolves around the patient as the center, this section, in particular, takes a patient-centric approach in portraying the patient as the driver in the utilization of technology. No one who uses this book will walk away a naysayer. In fact, the enthusiasm exuded by these examples is so infectious, both on a domestic and on an international level, that one is tempted to run and start the process of transformation. But wait—Section 5 takes you even further into the future, but with technologies that are, literally, just around the corner. Soon telehealth, evidence-based medicine, Web-enabled medicine, and public health surveillance will become commonplace.

Author-contributors to this book lived their individual chapters, thus making this book highly readable and applicable. This book will become for you a “how to” guide, a technology manual, a planning tool, and so much more as you take on a role in creating a new future for health care. We hope that you will enjoy this book—not only reading it, but also putting into practice information technology as an enabler of quality health care.

*Marion J. Ball
Charlotte A. Weaver
Joan M. Kiel*

Healthcare Information Management Systems

Cases, Strategies, and Solutions

Ball, M.J.; Weaver, C.A.; Kiel, J.M. (Eds.)

2004, XXVIII, 586 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-0-387-40805-7