

The Role of the Chief Nursing Informatics Officer

Position Statement of the American Nursing Informatics Association Board of Directors

American Nursing Informatics Association



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Purpose

The purpose of this position statement is to affirm the American Nursing Informatics Association's (ANIA) support for the role of the Chief Nursing Informatics Officer (CNIO) as an executive leader and full member of the executive team providing strategic vision and leadership to drive transformation in health care delivery through the use of data, information, knowledge and wisdom.

Statement of the ANIA Position

The ANIA advocates the position of CNIO as a nursing leader that drives the use of informatics to promote and support nursing practice and leadership.

Background

Nursing informatics has evolved into an integral part of health care delivery and is a key factor in the selection, implementation, and evaluation of health information technology (IT). Through changes in federal legislation such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, and the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, increased demands for technical solutions in health care have also increased demands for nursing informaticists. Nursing informatics provides a unique body of knowledge to lead these organizational initiatives. The value of these roles is demonstrated in improved integration of technology that provides safer, higher quality, and patient-centered care (American Nurses Association [ANA], 2015)

As the use of technology in clinical practice has grown, the need for a strategic approach to these solutions has also emerged (Kerby, 2015). This environment has generated the need for a nurse executive, namely a CNIO, to work in tandem with other senior leaders, such as the Chief Nurse Officer and Chief Information Officer, to drive transformational strategies that meet the needs of clinicians, as well as, the vision and goals, of an organization.

The CNIO is positioned to lead critical initiatives that influence improved clinical efficiencies operational, financial, and quality outcomes (American Organization of Nurse Executives [AONE], 2012). Through distinctive skills that combine clinical and technical knowledge, along with expertise in informatics, the CNIO has the operational and leadership skills to develop solutions to optimize organizational outcomes (AONE, 2012).

Key Responsibilities of a CNIO

The ANIA recognizes the following key responsibilities of a CNIO (Sengstack, 2014):

- Utilizes the knowledge and skills of clinical practice; aligns people, processes and technology to support evidence-based information systems that enable the delivery of efficient and effective nursing care across the organization.
- Participates as key strategic partner in providing informatics expertise in the planning and implementation of new care delivery and payment models.
- Provides leadership in the acquisition of data to answer questions that lead to improvements in business processes, finance, care delivery, safety, and outcomes.
- Demonstrates leadership competencies as defined by the 2015 ANA Scope and Standards for Nursing Informatics.
- Evaluates organizational informatics infrastructures and makes recommendations for structures that can better support the evolution of new care and payment models, as well as methods to support seamless care coordination across the care continuum.
- Educates executive level leaders on informatics concepts.
- Translates the impact of public policy initiatives into informatics practice.
- Provides consultation in the analysis of potential options for requested complex enhancements to the EHR that impact multiple departments and geographic markets.
- Participates in inter/intra professional feasibility assessments to identify potential areas of system improvement. This includes an analysis of the current practice and process, technical options and the potential impact of the solution options on the workflow.
- Contributes to policy and procedure development that will be used in conjunction with the evolving use of new technologies.
- Develops methodologies to measure and evaluate the outcome of clinical system implementations.
- Conducts routine communication with vendors; works with vendors to tailor content to organizational needs and potential for improvements to support clinical optimization.
- Actively participates in professional informatics organizations.
- Disseminates findings using evidence-based methodologies from health IT evaluation work.
- Understands emerging trends and promotes innovation in nursing practice through new technology.
- Maintains alignment to support research and outcomes.

Education

Nurses serving in CNIO positions should possess an active unencumbered RN license and a post Baccalaureate Nursing degree, and a Doctoral degree is preferred. This puts them in a position to serve at a partner level, as equals to other disciplines that may be at the corporate table. It prepares them as leaders to navigate the health care system at the highest level and gives them the skills to lead teams strategically through clinical transformation using technology. Additionally, nurses serving in CNIO roles should be board certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center in Informatics Nursing.

Summary

In order for organizations to achieve their strategic goals, improve adoption of technologies focusing on the patient's health care experience, meet the requirements of patients and clinicians, as well as those of governmental and accrediting agencies, an executive nursing informatics leader is essential.

The CNIO is an innovative leader with the vision, knowledge and skills to leverage informatics to facilitate clinicians to improve care outcomes. This puts them in a position to serve at a partner level, as equals to other disciplines that may be at the corporate table. This role positions organizations for success in a modern health care environment and provides an additional dimension of nursing executive representation. Through partnerships and collaboration with other inter/intra professional leaders, the CNIO can present a unified message and direction for innovation focused on safety, quality, and efficiency.

References

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