

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Health Information Management Association, Inc.

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGES

Incoming Presidents Message

June 2007

Words cannot express how honored I am to be Connecticut's HIMA president. I knew immediately while attending my first conference at Foxwoods in 1998 that CTHIMA was a very special group of people. The road here today was a difficult one and one that I cherish because of all the members of our association who encouraged me to step up and volunteer, step up and run for office and start getting involved.

There have been many CTHIMA members along the way who have helped me become involved with CTHIMA, and I am truly grateful. Since I have a public forum, I would like to thank them personally. Linda Miller who offered me mentoring that I desperately needed and wanted during my volunteer days. She introduced me to CTHIMA and encouraged me to get involved. I will forever be indebted to her for her guidance. Karen Lawler was the person that said "come on and get involved I want you to run for president"; she opened many doors for me to get involved in CTHIMA as well as AHIMA. Karen is a wonderful educator, mentor, and leader. CTHIMA is so proud to have her still representing us as the current past president of CTHIMA. Thanks Karen! I thank you for the wonderful support you have provided to me and many other CTHIMA members. When one looks at the amazing leaders we have had in the Health Information Management Profession that are also members of CTHIMA, we have to acknowledge how fortunate we are.

I have many plans for this year that I hope to accomplish. We are arranging a wonderful planning meeting for the coming year at Mohegan Sun on July 29, which is sure to be lots of fun as well as offer many opportunities for learning. I truly believe this meeting will be a magical experience for everyone. Let's all work toward that goal. I encourage you to visit the website for more information. (www.cthima.org). If you can't find it there, please feel free to contact me, Karen, Penny or our new president elect Tanya Srdanovic to have your questions answered.

Since becoming a member of CTHIMA, I have learned just how important the educational conferences are to CTHIMA members. It gives us the opportunity to network with others throughout our region. This is particularly important for CTHIMA members because we are steadily growing in numbers and I hope to continue that trend during my tenure as President. I hope the conferences we will bring to the membership offer plenty of chances for you to get to know other

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Health Information Management Association, Inc.

members of our association. I encourage each of you to meet others and get involved with CTHIMA. This can only provide strength for us in the future.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Penelope Deotte, who is serving as our central office coordinator. Penny has already worked very hard to make sure every detail regarding the members notices are sent to keep us all informed of what is coming. Penny has recently been given the tedious and most important job as the CTHIMA's Treasurer. Even with taking on a new position, she has maintained her commitment to CTHIMA and continues to do an outstanding job. Thanks Penny!

Increasing CTHIMA membership is always a priority, and this year will be no different. Over the years, we have focused particularly on increasing the membership of students and AHIMA professionals. I believe we have been successful at maintaining everyone's interest. We've probably been less successful at attracting others now that we have inclusive membership. I hope we can work on that this year. I will be working with the Executive Committee as well as our board to develop some creative ways to increase CTHIMA's membership. And, we are always open to ideas! If you have a great idea, please let me, Tanya or Karen know.

I will also be working with the Executive Committee and the board to develop a much-needed reference book on the things we need to do our jobs in this changing profession. Other goals include taking on an opportunity to have our own Hill Day and continuing our educational sessions as well our coding roundtables that Marty Cohen has agreed to continue. Thanks Marty and congratulations on your Award this past year.

And taking from Karen's outgoing message I will reiterate that we need to keep working on the issues so important to our profession here in Connecticut and for our sister CSAs around the country; the legal EHR, revenue cycle management, healthcare compliance, E-Discovery, diversity and regulatory affairs. We hope to see the completion of the online educational experience being developed by Briarwood and the development of the 4-year program.

I am looking forward to working with our incoming and second year Board members, Debbie Lobb, Cindy Zak, Phyllis Hilt, and Linda McKone and our new president elect Tanya Srdanovic. It will be very hard to fill the shoes our outgoing president Karen Lawler but I will do my best and may be asking for your help to continue with Karen's goals and the goals I share with you and our future together.

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

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With all of these goals, we need lots of help. If you want to be involved with CTHIMA, please ask. There are plenty of opportunities for anyone who is interested. And if we don't respond the first time, ask again. It worked for me.

Thank you for this privilege.

Cheers!

Donna
Donna Walker-Thomas, MBA, RHIA, CPC, CMA
dwalker-thomas@cthima.org

Outgoing President's Message

June 2007

It is with a touch of sadness, but with excitement for the future that I pen my last President's message. I have and continue to have the humble honor of serving you, dear members and friends of CT HIMA. I have heard from many of you throughout the year. Your suggestions, words of encouragement, support and your thanks to our Board are most appreciated.

What a year it has been. Beginning with our Board and volunteer planning session at the North Haven Holiday Inn in June of 2006, where the stage was set. At that meeting which was attended by Board members and several volunteers, we made a commitment to deliver educational and interactive sessions for issues that were on the forefront of our organization's concerns. Capitalizing on our contribution to the 6 state receiving honors for our combined educational sessions in 2006, we brought those organizational ideas to the Connecticut meetings. We listened to our members who requested sessions around the E-HR and the revenue cycle. The Coding Roundtable met the challenge by expanding the number of sessions, dedicating education to all types of coding delivery and holding Q & A sessions. The Connecticut Coding Roundtable was honored to receive an educational achievement award for our CSA in 2006 under Marty Cohen's leadership.

We kicked off our year in September 2006 by hosting what we hope will be a yearly meeting on the Electronic Medical Record transition. Well-known AHIMA speaker, [Kelly McClendon](#) was an honored guest, who did a terrific presentation. As anyone who attended will tell you, this was a long meeting, but well worth it. The afternoon portion of the program was dedicated to our many vendors who came to showcase their products and deliver presentations on their various areas of

CONNotations

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expertise. At this meeting we had over 70 members in attendance as well as attendees who were non-members. Growing attendance seems to be a trend at our business meetings. Other scheduled events throughout the year had common themes; Revenue Cycle and HIM role, Data gathering and Core Measures, Regulations, Hybrid Record and Telecommuting. At each meeting, we were also joined by vendors who supported our educational sessions, and also benefited attendees by learning about available services and products as well as hearing expertise in subject matters we are just beginning to scratch the surface on.

Along the way, we had some fun too. Deb Lobb planned our second annual Holiday Party at Zandris. The Holiday Party has become an annual event. We look forward to a possible change in venue this year, so if you have any suggestions, now is the time, as we are in the planning stages.

The association for the first time was in a position to invest in much needed equipment, a laptop and projector. We also contracted a storage area so that all the presidents (past, present and incoming as well as well as various board members will now find much needed space in their closets). Yes, and along the way, we actually balanced our revenues to our expenses, and I believe at the end of the day, showed a little more money in the bank.

For those members who attended the 6 state this year in Maine, you know CT was well represented with Cindy Zak, Phyllis Hilt and I as speakers in educational sessions. We have increased our collaboration with our neighbors, which again are critical to share success, and leverage educational opportunities.

The Board did not just focus on the educational sessions. Collaboration with other professional associations was and is also a goal. Donna and I have had the pleasure to attend, and also participate as invited speakers to the ISSA- security association, American Academy of Professional Coders, and the Healthcare Finance Management Association. I was asked to sit on the E-Health initiative board, whose collaborative project was filed for the beginning of the State's electronic exchange. Many of you also know that Donna is the chairperson of Connecticut Hospital Association's HIM Directors Group (taking over from me last year) and that current CTHIMA director, Debbie Lobb will be chairperson of the CHA group during next session year beginning in September. For a different type of collaboration, I sit on the State's Rideworks Board, as part of Telecommute initiative. I have been honored to be re-elected this year to another 2-year term. This is yet another area to tap for information. Incoming board director, Cindy Zak is an active member of the Project Management Institute. We look forward to learning more about this skill set, as we can all use project management skills to juggle our demands.

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Health Information Management Association, Inc.

As we plan next year, working with other associations is critical as we continue to tackle common issues of revenue cycle management and the E-HR. Through my relationship with HFMA, I was able to make a critical contact with the State legislative group that coordinates meetings with our representatives. A key focus for our desired CT Hill Day and you know that I will call upon this new referral to assist us.

Speaking of education; another critical goal from our planning back at the Holiday Inn, was to not only support Briarwood College, but to look toward supporting delivery of a virtual program and develop a 4-year degree. Phyllis Hilt took this challenge willingly and I am proud to announce to you that Briarwood is well on its way toward offering virtual classes in the upcoming year, and the 4-year program will be a reality this time next year. This year, Naugatuck Community College began offering a coding program with a new twist; the program includes a curriculum dedicated to HIM. I was able to collaborate with the college to teach this first course. As you know the Board continues to lay out the challenge for all HIM professionals to support education, accept students for clinicals, and participate in teaching where feasible. Several of you do instruct at Briarwood, for which we are grateful.

So, we have A LOT of work ahead of us. Momentum is pushing us up that long hill and we are not looking back. Our membership increased this year. We added a 4th delegate due to our numbers, as mandated by AHIMA, to our delegation to the national meeting. We have seen attendance grow and reach numbers we have not seen in a long time at our business meetings. Our organization embraced Inclusive Membership. We have a developed website, vendor sponsors, merchandise, and let us also not forget, with a big hand to Penny, whose contributions and hard work we are most grateful. THANK YOU Penny for keeping me on track and keeping our members informed.

As I said before, this is an exciting time to be a member of CT AHIMA. Through our education and increasing presence, we assure our growth and needs of our members by reaching out to expert partners in the areas where we need training and information exchange. With the board, we will continue to push the agenda of E-HR, revenue cycle management, compliance, E-Discovery, Diversity and regulatory issues. We will plan our first CT hill day this year. We will see the completion of the virtual education at Briarwood and the development of the 4-year program. We will continue our collaboration with other associations so our members will be present around the table during critical discussions at our organizations that require our expertise.

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Health Information Management Association, Inc.

I do use the operative pronoun WE, yes YOU, the Board is reaching out to you, dear members, to continue to support, assist and give us active feedback for how we can serve. I begin to sit back now and turn the reins over to Donna and Tanya, whose energy and drive will continue to lead our wonderful organization. I call you all to meet us on July 29th, at Mohegan Sun for an interactive planning session. While you all know we like to have fun, we also work very hard, and at this roll up the sleeve session we expect to plot out the entire year. Hey and maybe we can get lucky on the slots too! But most importantly, this session is the blueprint for our future. Your suggestions and participation are crucial. As evidenced by this past year, we cannot and will not do it alone.

More details will follow within the body of this newsletter for our July 29th planning session and email reminder from Penny. SO MARK YOUR CALENDAR.

Wow, it seemed like it was going to be a long year and I did not know how I was going to get through it, but here it is. Thank you Marty, Penny, Donna, Tanya, Cindy, Deb, Linda, Betsy, Dawn, Vivian, Janice, Phyllis and the countless members who helped me. I thank the Hospital of Saint Raphael's and my HIM department, whose support of my election I am most grateful for. With quiet sadness, and deep gratitude, I sign off as your President.

Thank you for this honor!

Best

KAREN

Karen J Lawler, MPS, RHIA

klawler@cthima.org

ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING
MOHEGAN SUN
FRIDAY, JUNE 29TH
10AM TO 4 PM
CONTACT DONNA, KAREN OR PENNY IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Health Information Management Association, Inc.

CODING ROUNDTABLE UPDATE

The Coding Roundtable Committee had its last educational session of the year on June 8th. This session consisted of a question and answer workshop, which we held at Masonic Healthcare Center in Wallingford, CT. We had asked members to submit questions ahead of time so that we could research the answers. We did receive several questions from members, which brought lively discussion to our meeting. Cheryl D'Amato researched the questions ahead of time and presented the answers via PowerPoint. She also had the Coding Clinics on her laptop, so we were able to project to the members in attendance. After the submitted questions were answered, we discussed a wide range of topics such as: "Seizures vs. Epilepsy", "ER Coding", "E&M Coding", "Sepsis", "Respiratory Failure", "Physicians Query Process in hospitals", "Coding Robotic Assisted Surgery", as well as other questions from the audience.

The meeting was done using a panel discussion with the Coding Roundtable Committee Members leading the discussion. These members included Vivian Furtado, Janice McDonnell, Dawn Jacobs, Leslie Johnson, Keron Bourret, Fay Karanian, and Cheryl D'Amato. The meeting was attended by about 55 coding professionals, and based on the evaluations we received; this type of workshop was very helpful to those who attended.

While we had to overcome our parking problems, it seemed that this was Grand Masters Weekend at Masonic, and parking was at a premium. The Staff at Masonic was very accommodating and was able to park all our attendees. We learned a few things which should make future workshops that much more informative. We found that we really needed a microphone, speaking to a large crowd was difficult. We also will divide the Audience into different groups of interest (ER coding, inpatient coding, long term care coding) So that each group will be able to discuss their own issues.

So going forward the committee will be looking to bring you the best speakers, subject matter, and best educational sessions that you have become accustomed to from our Committee. The Committee will be meeting on June 20th to start to plan for the upcoming year. Just some things to look for are a full day Preparation for the CCS exam. This will be the same session that was presented at the 6 state meeting. This session will be for experienced coders who need help in preparation for taking the exam. This meeting will take place around the 15th of Oct. We are also planning to do a Long Term Care Coding Roundtable this year. As always we will be bringing you the coding updates in September, as well as speakers on the current issues such as POA, Medical Necessity, and Cardiovascular Radiology

I would like to thank Cheryl D'Amato, who was a speaker for us this year, as well as all the help she provided at this last workshop. I would also like to thank our Committee: Vivian, Keron,

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Health Information Management Association, Inc.

Janice, Faye, Dawn, Leslie, Karen, and the many people that have provided input to the committee.

Sincerely

Martin Cohen, RHIT
CTHIMA Coding Roundtable Coordinator
mcohen@cthima.org

COMMITTEE AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

With the goal of communication in mind, our board is committed to engaging our members. I urge you to review the committees and their charge, for potential volunteer opportunities in assisting their efforts. They are:

Legal - The Legal Committee will update our Release of Information Manual, continue planning education on HIPAA, review bylaws and work with the Advocacy Committee on our own CT Hill Day.

Advocacy - The Advocacy Committee concentration is on member support, PHR training, Hill day, and collaboration with other associations.

Education - The Education Committee will develop marketing tools for employers, explore virtual training, develop scholarships, and assist with the expansion of the accredited HIM programs at Briarwood College.

Ways and Means - The Ways and Means Committee is responsible for maintaining our website, obtaining corporate sponsors, planning fundraisers, and assisting with developing our marketing packages.

Coding Roundtable - The Coding Roundtable will develop programs dedicated to Severity DRGs, ICD-10, revenue cycle management, and collaboration with other professional societies dedicated to the coding and bill preparation function.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Donna, Tanya, Karen, or Penny. Please consider attending the Planning Meeting on June 29th. Also if you know of a speaker who would be interested in presenting on our key topics of interest, please feel free to contact us with this information.

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Health Information Management Association, Inc.

Lighting the Way into the Future
2007 Six-New England State HIMA Annual Meeting
By Tanya Srdanovic, MPA, RHIA

It's been another successful year for our New England HIMA Annual meeting with 385 attendees, 34 from Connecticut, 60 exhibiting companies and 25 speakers including our very own Karen Lawler, MPA, RHIA, Cindy Zak, MS, RHIA, PMP and Phyllis Hilt, MBA, RHIA. The meeting took place in Portland, Maine where the attendees took on many educational sessions, new concepts, working tools and knowledge base along with much consumed Maine lobster!

The two days consisted of full agendas, covering Health Care Policy and Reform, Billing and coding issues specific to Critical Access Hospitals, APR DRGs Grouping and Methodology and updates on QIO Review/PEPPER Reports in New England to name a few of the many. Day one opened with an exciting welcome/announcements from the MeHIMA President Pamela Haney, MS, RHIA and day two offered an exciting networking breakfast: "the RHIO Experience in New England" with guest panelist Karen Lawler which was a lively discussion regarding the current and future state of RHIOs.

Not only was this year's conference full of informative sessions, there was a great deal of fun with the Silent Auction, Presidents reception and most importantly networking with peers and vendors to establish invaluable relationships; all to support our day to day work and our profession. Many door prizes were awarded and the auction items were hot to bid! We look forward to next year's event and strongly encourage you to add the conference into your FY08 budgets!

**The 2008 Annual 6-State Conference will be held May 19th
and 20th in Worcester, MA**

Save the Dates!

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Health Information Management Association, Inc.

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Providing quality medical transcription in an electronic record environment is our only business, so all our resources and abilities are concentrated on that objective.

Prior to 1998, the principals were involved in a major east coast medical transcription service as Vice President of Operations, and Director of Technology and Customer Support. The experience of the officers cover every aspect of the HIM/Electronic record components, from training MTs, to operating procedures and interfacing with Information Technology departments, to providing support as partners, and insuring the satisfaction of the physicians on staff.

We maintain memberships in the major medical Health Information Management agencies that provide our clients with information on the latest technology, requirements and functionalities being offered. In this way, we are sure to always have the ability to meet the requests of our clients very quickly.

<http://www.phoenixmedcom.com/index.html>

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Health Information Management Association, Inc.

30 YEARS IN THE BUSINESS WE LOVE! WE MUST BE DOING SOMETHING RIGHT.

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Qualifications include RHIA, RHIT or CCS certification; Minimum of 8 years Current Coding Experience using ICD-9-CM, CPT-4 and HCPCS Coding Systems; Minimum of 3 - 5 years Inpatient and/or Outpatient Auditing experience; Previous Coding and Training Experience; Exceptional Written and Verbal Communication Skills; Excellent Computer Skills; Management Experience a Plus

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P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

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paid advertisement

Briarwood College Update

Where Have Our Students Gone:

2006 graduates are employed in their field as follows:

- Outpatient coding, acute care
- Inpatient coding, acute care
- Health information management, acute care

Online Course Development:

The 2-year HIT Program is now being developed to be offered online as well as onground. We will begin developing our courses online in June and continue through next summer.

This means additional faculty. We will need instructors for online and onground courses. If you are an RHIA with a baccalaureate degree (master's preferred) and are interested in becoming an adjunct, please send us your resume with a letter of intent. This can be mailed to:

Briarwood College
Attention: Phyllis Hilt
2279 Mount Vernon Road
Southington, CT 06489.

We also will be looking for adjuncts for our 4-year program hopefully starting in the fall of 2008. Let's keep our fingers crossed!

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Please check out the new Job Bank feature at www.cthima.org
Current listings can be found on the [Newsletters, Agendas, and Notices](#) page

The site was last updated June 12, 2007

If your facility would like to post a position, please have your Human Resource Department email us at:

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Health Information Management Association, Inc.

pdeotte@cthima.org or dlobb@cthima.org

THE POLLS ARE NOW OPEN FOR THE AHIMA ELECTION!

Ensure AHIMA's Leadership Engagement: Cast Your Vote!

Your vote determines the Association's direction. Choosing the right leaders helps realize goals that benefit you and determine how membership dollars are spent. And this year, it's easier than ever!

Polls will open on Monday, June 11, 2007 at 12:00 a.m. Be ready to record your votes for president-elect, the Board of Directors, the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM), and the Council on Certification. Polls close at 11:59 p.m. (CST) on June 29, 2007.

If you are eligible to vote (active AHIMA members as of May 31, 2007, are eligible), making your choice is simple. **Vote online by visiting your Communities of Practice (CoP) home page.** Go to www.ahima.org. In the **myAHIMA** log in box on the upper right hand side, enter your **AHIMA ID** and **password** (your last name in lowercase letters, unless you changed your password through your member profile or if you joined AHIMA online). Click "Enter myAHIMA," and select the Communities of Practice link. Voting instructions will appear for those eligible to vote.

Detailed biographies and position statements for each candidate are available on the ballot by clicking the candidate's name. You can view the candidate's brief bio and photo in the June *Journal of AHIMA* (pages 90-93).

The Board of Directors of CTHIMA endorses Vera Rulon, MS, RHIT, CCS for the office of President-Elect.

Please consider casting your vote for Vera!

After casting your vote, please log onto the Geographic: Connecticut CoP

The CSA CoP that shows the greatest percentage of improvement from last years participation will be eligible for a prize.

Join one of the discussions already in progress, or start a new thread!

Let us know what you would like to see posted on the CoP, [this is your forum.](#)

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Health Information Management Association, Inc.

We would like to present this year's recipients of the

**SPECIAL THANKS AND RECOGNITION
(STAR)
Award**

This award expresses our appreciation of the volunteers who have gone

Above and Beyond

Karen Bourret
Mary Carroll
Beverly Clark
Faye Davis
Vivian Furtado
Dawn Jacobs

Faye Karanian
Paula Magnanti
Janice McDonnell
Tanya Srdanovic
Holly Stepensky
Cindy Zak

Leslie Johnson



A FEW REMINDERS

Remember to keep your profile updated at www.ahima.org – this is where all our membership information and contact email addresses come from – make sure that you continue to receive all your Newsletters and Updates

If you would like to submit content for the Fall issue of CONNotations, please send information to cthima@comcast.net by August 15, 2007. Suggested items for inclusion:

- **News about programs or practices at your facility**
- **Good news about an accomplishment (personal or professional) by you, a member of your staff, or a colleague**
- **Advertisements – see the website for rates and information**

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Health Information Management Association, Inc.

Please Join Us in Welcoming the Newest Members of CTHIMA

Hillary Marino

Diolanda Felipe

Kathleen Schulz

George De la Torre

Doris Rodriguez

Patricia Kaminsky

Jaime Szyszka

Jaclyn Woodbury

Marina Matrunionak

Tracey Nolan

Maria Dabrowska

Theresa Mladinich

Denise Smith

Kris Parker

Alexa Johnson

Frances Pulisciano

Jenny Horak

Lynn Bobskill

Marion Krisowaty

Jill Clark

Mary Hill

Chanda Gamble

**CTHIMA WILL PRESENT A CCS-PREP COURSE ON MONDAY,
OCTOBER 15, 2007**

**AT THE CSCPA CENTER
BROOKS ST, ROCKY HILL, CT**

WE WILL KEEP YOU POSTED AS DETAILS BECOME AVAILABLE

CONNotations

P.O. Box 39, Rockfall, CT 06481-0039

The Newsletter of the Connecticut Health Information Management Association, Inc.

CTHIMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2007-2008

PRESIDENT	DONNA WALKER-THOMAS MBA, RHIA, CPC, CMA Dwalker-thomas@cthima.org
PRESIDENT-ELECT	TANYA SRDANOVIC, MPS, RHIA tsrdanovic@cthima.org
PAST PRESIDENT	KAREN J LAWLER, MPS, RHIA klawler@cthima.org
Directors, 2 nd year	PHYLLIS HILT, MBA, RHIA philt@cthima.org
	LINDA MCKONE, RHIT lmckone@cthima.org
Directors, 1 st year	DEBORAH B LOBB, RHIA, CPH, CTR dlobb@cthima.org
	CINDY ZAK, MS, RHIA, PMP czak@cthima.org
Central Office Coordinator	PENELOPE R DEOTTE, RHIT, CCS, CTR PO BOX 39 ROCKFALL, CT 06481-0039 pdeotte@cthima.org phone: 860-347-5778 fax: 860-499-5046

Please feel free to contact any board member with your ideas, issues or concerns.