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*Please discuss why you chose the HIM profession. Include what you hope to do through your professional affiliation.*

Before beginning my college career at Texas State University in San Marcos in August 2006, I knew I wanted to study something in the health care field, but I was not sure exactly what. After working at a physical therapy clinic in Houston, I learned that I would rather make a health care career out of a profession that did not involve direct patient care.

During the summer of 2006, I talked with my aunt, Cassie Dawson Gentry, about all the different career paths in the health care industry with a degree in health information management. Cassie graduated from the University of Texas with a degree in Medical Records and is now the program director of the Health Information Technology department at the Community College of Southern Nevada. It was during this conversation with her that I learned about health information management and realized how truly interested I was in this field.

I did not realize how interested I was in the quality improvement profession until I did my internship at Christus St. Catherine Hospital in Katy, Texas. I worked closely with the Director of Quality Performance/Risk Management and her staff, working on periodic performance reviews and looking at core measures.

While doing my internship at Christus St. Catherine, I was able to assemble and analyze patient charts, assist the physician liaison with getting the doctors to dictate or sign their notes, as well as work with the birth registrar in typing the Verification of Birth Facts for the new mothers.

When working with the Medical Records Coordinator during my internship, I was able to run reports for the ABS Hold, help with the bill drop, and assist in the internal RAC review process. When running the ABS Hold reports, I formatted the report and separated the cases by the department that was the reason for the hold on the chart.

I learned how much a facility could benefit from having an electronic health record. Christus St. Catherine is completely paper based, and should have at least a hybrid system in one to two years. When working with the paper records, I learned that having an electronic health record would be easier when it comes to the accessibility of the health information, interoperability, and most importantly, in increasing the quality of patient care.

Since I have completed my internship at Christus St. Catherine, I have learned that I have chosen a profession that fits me very well; I really enjoy everything about the profession, from protecting patient information to extracting data from medical records for the quality chart reviews.

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I plan on utilizing my four-year degree towards a management position in either the health information management department, or in the quality improvement/risk management department. There are more hospitals opening up on the west side of Houston, and I hope to obtain a position at one of these hospitals upon graduation. I am really looking forward to my future in health information management, as I know I will work my hardest in order to succeed in this profession.