

Expert Review on the Current Trends of “Health and Medical Informatics”

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Informatics will have a profound impact on the delivery of health services in the future. Forecasts of national demand provide a strong indication of high level of future demand in the area of health informatics. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, for example, projects that employment in health informatics and related fields will grow nearly 18% by 2016. The Bureau projects a need for more than 6,000 new professionals each year through 2014. Similarly, according to the Occupation Outlook Handbook, employment in the health informatics field is expected to grow (projected 20% increase) much faster than the average across all fields.

Because of these trends many institutions of higher learning are actively working to develop programs to meet the needs of healthcare organizations. University programs seeks to provide students with a complete education in understanding the role of informatics (ie. the application of technological devices, resources, methods and techniques) in transforming the healthcare delivery field, to assist students in developing their academic and professional skills through general education and upper-division courses, and to provide students with opportunities to participate in civic engagement.

Schools of Public Health and Health Care Management programs are becoming an option for health informatics students in many of our major cities, and indirectly help the university become an economic catalyst for their regions. Furthermore, the mission of the Master of Science in Health Informatics will be complementary to that of our existing MPH and MHA programs. The MSHI program will aim to educate professionals to assume careers at the mid-career level in health services and health information technology arenas, emphasizing progressive decision-making and managerial responsibilities in positions that can be obtained within the greater Chicago metropolitan area and the state of Illinois. The program will be particularly interested in attracting students who traditionally have been underserved by higher education and will aim to instill in students a strong commitment to standards of professionalism.

Graduates of Health Informatics programs will work in a wide range of settings and roles within the health services industry. Their activities will reflect the positioning of this program to prepare leaders at the forefront of a dynamic field.

A Sampling of Job Settings

Health informatics graduates are positioned to work at:

- Small information technology companies, including start-ups
- Public health agencies: local, state, national
- Hospitals, clinics, and other health care settings
- Insurance companies
- Healthcare and technology consulting firms
- Research and development organizations, including universities and pharmaceutical companies
- Professional organizations and societies

• A Sampling of Job Types

Graduates will pursue a varied range of positions with an equally varied range of job titles, such as:

- Corporate technology or innovation officer
- Medical/nursing/public health information officer
- Health application designer/developer
- Change manager/workflow re-designer
- Consultant/analyst/strategic planner
- Program evaluation/quality improvement specialist

As a scholarly journal, the Journal of Health & Medical Informatics (JHMI) will be an important resource in supporting student and faculties in integrating best practices in the information and communication related to healthcare, medicine and their applications in medical information systems.

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