



JENNIFER CURRIE
PRIVACY OFFICER, NOVA
SCOTIA HEALTH AUTHORITY;
CHAPTER CHAIR NSPE

When Jennifer Currie entered the field of Health Information Technology, she was looking for a career and a portable one at that. Her husband was a career military member who was posted in a variety of locations across the country. Jennifer had done administrative jobs that allowed her to make a salary and look after her family, but she decided it was time to be more intentional in pursuing her career. When her husband was stationed for a two-year stint in Winnipeg, she enrolled in the Health Information Technology program at Red River College, graduating with honours as her husband was about to be redeployed to Nova Scotia.

As someone who was always eager to get involved in a variety of capacities, Jennifer had attended a CHIMA conference held in Winnipeg while a HIM student. There she made a point of finding Nova Scotian delegates. One of them became her boss. She says, “For me, that networking piece has always been a big part of CHIMA. I said, ‘remember me, we met at the conference?’ It was a way to get my foot in the door for the job.”

While her initial role was as a health information specialist, coding, her ongoing involvement with CHIMA led to her current role as the Privacy Officer for the Western Zone of the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA). She says, “Having experienced advantages from this networking in my role as the Chapter Chair for NSPE for CHIMA, I now think about how I can put those advantages before other people.” For Jennifer, this often has to do with encouraging HIM

students by serving as a reference or mentor, encouraging them to serve on CHIMA or Chapter committees, working with their schools to offer them opportunities at conferences and more.

While students are often keen to take advantage of these opportunities, Jennifer and her Chapter are seeking ways to connect with more seasoned HIM professionals to offer them opportunities. Even as a midcareer professional, Jennifer continues to be eager to grow in her career, starting a certificate in Information Access and Protection of Privacy from the University of Alberta the very same day she started work as a Privacy Officer. “It was privacy all day and all night,” she says, noting that the learning has benefitted her work, and vice versa.

She is encouraged that she increasingly sees CHIMA certification coming up as a requirement or preference in job postings at NSHA, noting that as more HIM professionals prepare to retire it’s a good time to get newly certified people into the profession, in part to keep the knowledge base from the retiring workers but also because it is a growing career path.

A self-described “big enthusiast” about health information management, Jennifer encourages CHIMA and HIM professionals to expand the definition of “traditional roles” beyond coders: “For a long time now there have been a wide variety of HIM roles. The more we talk about the diversity of roles, and particularly those in data analysis, decision making and privacy, the more we will attract people to this field.”

