



NICOLE NEIDIG

DIRECTOR, HEALTH
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT,
CENTRAL ZONE, AT ALBERTA
HEALTH SERVICES

When Nicole Neidig says, “Personal growth and education have been fundamental to my career and to who I am as a person,” she’s not kidding. After graduating as a medical office assistant/transcriptionist, Nicole managed a neurologist’s private practice in Ottawa. After a few years, she was offered the opportunity to build and manage a cardiology transcription department. She then joined one of Ontario’s largest Family Health Teams as Manager, Medical Records and Registration. During this time, she completed the Health Information Management Program through distance education and successfully challenged the CHIMA exams before moving to northern British Columbia where she led a team in implementing clinical information solutions in rural physician clinics and hospitals. In 2013, she joined Alberta Health Services as the Manager, HIM, for Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre and moved into her current role of Director HIM, Central Zone in 2015. In 2016, she completed a Master of Arts in Leadership Degree through Royal Roads University with a thesis focused on fostering adoption of health information technology. She continues her educational journey by working towards certification in leadership/life coaching.

But while her career path amply demonstrates Nicole's passion for lifelong learning, a key element to what inspires her work is missing from her standard resume: her own near-death experience following complications after the emergent birth of her son. "Eight days after my son was prematurely born, I was taken to hospital with pulmonary embolisms. It was a weekend and having recently been discharged, my paper chart was buried on a desk somewhere. Knowing my history, I could explain what had happened, but a lot of people wouldn't have been able to. That solidified for me the importance of my work in health information management." At that time—17 years ago—electronic records weren't widely used. Nicole says, "The experience made me realize the importance of having health information accessible and available electronically. This was why I went back to school to gain my certification in Health Information Management and why I moved into the leadership stream so that I could advocate for electronic health records."

Excited about change and new technologies, Nicole is encouraged by the evolving and emerging roles of health information professionals. "A lot of people don't understand what health information management truly is, there are so many domains and areas of practice beyond being a file clerk or coder. CHIMA advocates for that." As a leader in her organization, Nicole also appreciates the accreditation process: "When someone successfully challenges the CHIMA exam, I know the body of knowledge they bring. It helps inform our training and education expectations." She adds, "For me personally, I find value in connecting and networking with my CHIMA colleagues across the province and country."

Having had good mentors and coaches throughout her career, Nicole is excited about helping young health information management professionals develop in their roles. She encourages them to do what she did – taking charge of their careers, exploring opportunities, taking chances, trusting that every open door leads to another.



CANADIAN HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION