



## How to gather networking participants

Isolation is no way to work. As the role of clinical documentation integrity (CDI) specialists continues to grow, CDI professionals need to reach out to others in the field. Local meetings offer an avenue to share experiences and learn best practices. It also helps foster community, build networks, solve problems, and advance the discipline. Chances are if you're reaching out, wanting to connect with others, others are out there looking for you. Follow these steps to get started.

### Let ACDIS know your interests

ACDIS wants to facilitate networking opportunities for its members and expand educational opportunities for CDI professionals throughout the country. After all, "ACDIS is a community in which CDI professionals share strategies for successful CDI programs and achieve professional growth. Its mission is to bring CDI specialists together." Letting the national association know you are interested in getting a group started is the first step. Email the ACDIS team at [info@acdis.org](mailto:info@acdis.org). A member of the national team will set up a convenient time to chat and review the expectations, requirements, and offer assistance.

ACDIS will help generate participation in your networking efforts by emailing national members from your state/region letting them know about your interests. ACDIS will also email its membership on an annual basis regarding networking efforts in their areas. If you have planned events such information will be sent, otherwise we will communicate chapter leaders' contact information.

ACDIS also maintains a number of networking and communication tools including the [ACDIS Forum](#) and groups on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Each of these venues allows users to post comments, concerns, and interests. We encourage chapter leaders to avail themselves of these forums. Additionally, chapter leaders are asked to send any information regarding upcoming meetings on a monthly basis via the [Online Leadership Request Form](#). This information is posted in the weekly e-newsletter [CDI Strategies](#).

### Call your friends and neighbors

Look to the other hospitals and healthcare facilities in your state. Call the main number and ask to speak to the CDI department. You could be surprised by the energy and enthusiasm on the other end of the line.

### Reach out to case management, HIM, and quality

Some facility operators may not know about their hospital's CDI program, or the facility may not have a CDI program yet. Ask to speak to the health information management (HIM), case management, and/or quality director, even when there's no evidence of an existing CDI program at the facility, says Gail Marini, MM, RN, CCS, manager of clinical documentation for South Shore Hospital (SSH) in Weymouth, MA, who helped start the New England ACDIS Chapter in 2006.

Marini found sending flyers with meeting information to area hospitals worked well. One woman saw the flyer and, although she knew nothing about CDI efforts at the time, came to the meeting to learn more and remained an active member of the group.

Although CDI programs are growing across the nation, there are still many facilities without programs in place. When Susan Tiffany, RN, CCDS, previous leader of a New York/Pennsylvania ACDIS networking group started searching for fellow professionals, "most [hospital] operators had no idea who [or what] I was asking for," she says.



If that happens try connecting to documentation improvement efforts via other departments, Tiffany suggests. When she started in 2009, Tiffany Googled all healthcare facilities in a 100-mile radius of her own organization and began making phone calls. While that may seem daunting, it need not be a labor-intensive activity. Just make one phone call, once a week to a different facility and see what happens.

### **Collect contact information**

As you begin to make connections don't forget to collect the contact information of your new friends and file it in a convenient central location. It's easy to misplace emails or lose that scrap of paper with someone's phone number. Ask those you connect with to share your information with other CDI professionals in their organization or others they might know. ACDIS has created an Online Membership Roster to help you collect the necessary information.