MMI 407
Research Project

For this Research Project, students will be asked to write a research paper that presents a detailed forward-thinking proposal to improve upon some aspect of ***the legal regulation*** of healthcare data, medical informatics and/or healthcare information management systems, and which will benefit medical informatics as a discipline, or improve the quality of patient care, or improve the operation of the U.S. healthcare system relating to medical data.

Students will be expected to thoroughly research and take a critical look at the following:
- Relevant history of that legal issue;
- The current state;
- Identify any evolving social/ethical mores that are driving your suggested change in the law;
- Discuss any compliance issues; and
- Most importantly, outline in detail the future state as envisioned by the student and how that state is an improvement over the current state. Among other things, consider how an existing law or regulation should be revised, or a new one enacted, or how implementation, oversight or enforcement should be changed, or compliance burden should be shifted, or whether state government should be responsible for the issue, or would the federal government be more effective, etc.

The academic goals of this student Research Project are to stimulate creative thinking about the legal, ethical and social framework that applies to healthcare data handling today; to inspire critical thinking about "accepted wisdom"; and finally, to demonstrate thought leadership regarding future legal and ethical regulation of medical informatics within the U.S. social landscape.

Students are expected to apply as much of the legal, compliance and regulatory framework, and as many of the ethical and social concerns studied in class as are relevant to the research paper.

Once again, it is important for students to understand that the Instructor is *not* grading this project on whether your ultimate "forward-thinking proposal" is right or wrong, and it does *not* matter if the Instructor agrees with your creative suggestions, or not… rather the grade will largely depend on the depth of your research and rigor of the analysis; that is, the thought process you demonstrate in constructing and supporting your arguments, supporting your position and your proposed recommendations.

Each student shall:

1. Consider the legal, ethical and social issues and concerns that were presented and discussed in class or through assigned readings, and choose a topic, regulation, law, compliance situation or area that you believe needs to be changed, modified or can be improved upon, to the benefit of either medical informatics as a discipline, or to improve the quality of patient care, or to improve the operation of the U.S. healthcare system relating to medical data;

2. **Get approval from the Instructor** for your chosen topic, including the scope of that topic; and

3. Timely submit a paper that is about 20-35 pages, double spaced, standard margins, with a bibliography of all sources used in the Research Paper.

Here are some sample Research Paper topic suggestions for you to consider… feel free to be creative beyond this list! But whatever your topic is, be sure to run it past the Instructor first…

<u>Remember</u>: *Many 407 students use this Research Paper assignment to explore ideas and write a paper that they eventually will turn into their Capstone Project. You will have a solid head start on your thesis. The Instructor always provides a paragraph of comments on each student's paper, so if you are interested, the Instructor is happy to provide additional comments and suggestions on how you can turn your paper into a Capstone… just ask!*

- Should The Joint Commission get involved in accrediting medical informatics work and data handling, and to what extent?

- Read "HIPAA Paradox: The Privacy Rule That's Not" by Richard Sobel (MMI 407 Required Reading). Should a healthcare consumer advocate-focused committee be established at the federal level? Why or why not?

-AHRQ's proposal for a National Healthcare Stewardship Entity…A good idea or a bad idea?

- Do current vendor Codes of Conduct go far enough to mitigate/eliminate undue influence or otherwise resolve conflicts of interest?

- IHI's questionable collection of data for their 100,000 Lives Campaign…What went wrong?

- Improve intellectual property protections for medical informatics work product, inventions, solutions, formulae, algorithms, information architecture, etc….Do we need a new IP protection for informaticists' work product?

-How can insurance be used to decrease healthcare costs and increase quality of care?

- HIPAA privacy or security regulations for protecting healthcare data… Can we do better?

- Problems and solutions for RHIO privacy and security, and other legal issues

- P4P… Is it good for the business of healthcare? Good for patients? Good for physicians? Good for medical informaticists? Good for payers?

- Should medical informaticists be regulated or licensed or accredited as are other healthcare professionals who can influence quality of care? Continuing Informatics Education (CIE) requirements a good idea?

- Newly proposed payment model called the Prometheus Payment model. Seemed like an interesting approach that bases payment on evidence based case rates, while at the same time withholding a portion of the payment and redistributing based on provider performance. Will this work? Can you propose modifications to it to make it work?

- Legal and ethical issues arising from use of Human-Implantable RFID chips

- What is the appropriate role of a cost-effectiveness analysis in healthcare rationing? Is it time for physicians/ins co/managed care orgs/gov to consider the cost-effectiveness of new healthcare technologies; consider how best to ration healthcare, if at all. Should standard medical training provide physicians with the expertise to decide when to withhold hi-tech healthcare from patients? Serious ethical and moral questions are raised by this position, and by healthcare rationing in general.

NOTE: This Research Project paper represents 25% of the Project grade for MMI 407.