ANI Innovator Profiles

American Nursing Informatics Association
Interview with Vicki Vallejos, BSN, RN-BC
President, American Nursing Informatics Association (ANIA)
http://www.ania.org/

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The Alliance for Nursing Informatics (ANI) is a collaboration of organizations that represents more than 5,000 nurse informaticists and brings together 30 distinct nursing informatics groups globally.

Mission: To advance NI leadership, practice, education, policy and research through a unified voice of nursing informatics organizations

Vision: Transform health and health care through nursing informatics and innovation

ANI Innovator Profiles Program
The purpose of this program is to capture an ANI Innovator Profile for each ANI member organization to increase awareness and visibility, and to describe their contribution towards a unified voice for nursing informatics.

ANI Innovator Profile – ANIA
The Capitol Area Roundtable on Informatics in Nursing, known as CARING was created and organized in 1982 as a non-profit undertaking to provide a forum for the advancement of automated healthcare information systems. This was followed in 1992 by the creation of American Nursing Informatics Association, known as ANIA, which provided the first opportunity for informatics nurses in Southern California to meet and network. The mission of both organizations was to advance the delivery of healthcare through the integration of informatics, provide networking opportunities, education and information resources to strengthen the role of nursing informatics. Similar in cause and membership, the organizations grew to have members in all fifty states and 34 countries. In 2007, a poll of the two organizations members proved strong support for a merger and after three years, the merger was completed in 2010 with formation of the new organization known as ANIA-CARING.

The organization, now known as ANIA, continues to meet its mission by providing education via webinars and an annual conference. In 2013 the conference will be held in San Antonio, Texas. Networking opportunities are provided through regional events and a robust list serv that allows members to post questions and answers and provide support. A peer reviewed quarterly newsletter is published in CINAHL. For more information please visit the new ANIA website at www.ania.org.

ANIA Interview with Vicki Vallejos, BSN, RN-BC

1. **What is the primary mission of ANIA?**

   Since the merger of ANIA and CARING, we have been working towards deleting the duplication of services while still offering our members education and networking. After 2 years, just this April, we changed the name back to ANIA and that is what we are known as now. With the new Board, we have added some new positions that we did not have in the past. Four new regional directors were added, with the country split into 4 areas and each regional directors has their own area and their responsibility is to arrange different networking events for members in that area. The first year we had about 10 events but last year we had 28 different regional events and this year we have already had 20 events, so we are off to a good start of just trying to bring people together in their regions through networking events. Now, we are looking into beginning a webinar series that directly applies to informatics.

2. **How many members do you currently have?**

   We currently have over 2,800 members in 34 countries in addition to all of the states in the United States. Almost 17% of those members are also certified in informatics through the ANCC. That is something we are proud of and that is something we strongly encourage is that focus on getting board certified and making our voices as a specialty stronger.

3. **What projects is ANIA working on to advance informatics and innovation in healthcare?**

   We have recently signed on with an association management company and they have taken over a lot of the day to day activities, making sure the web site is kept up to date, making sure the list serv is running correctly - everything that used to take up a lot of time which leaves us with more time to do strategic planning. We want to start some additional groups within our members, such as a volunteer group that looks at legislation. That is something that we as a Board have worked closely with ANI on in the past. For example, when there are calls for public comments we try to put together those comments from our members to share with ANI and all that information be submitted at the same time as ANI. Right now, it is the Board members that have been pulling that information together. It is our hope that the process can be led by one of our general members who is very concerned and very active in legislation who would be willing to take that on. This committee would pull together comments of 2800 nurses and put that into a format to submit to ANI for inclusion.

   We are also continuing a push for education, making sure that on every level of nursing informatics education is available and prominent. With the advent of the electronic health record (EHR) and Meaningful Use and moving further into a more electronic world, assuring every hospital has access to information that they can use to train their nurses that have been there 10, 20, or even 30 years. Not just on how to use that equipment or how to document that electronic record but to really understand the meaning behind what they're doing. That they perform informatics activities every day, and they need to understand what that brings to the table especially for patients and patient's outcomes.

4. **What value do you see in ANIA being an ANI member?**

   I see strong value in that agreement of a unified voice. There is so much going on in healthcare right now not just in our own country but around the world, it is a global concern these days. And all too often the voice of the nurse seems to be lost and not considered when it's time to sit down at the table and really discuss not just healthcare but patient outcomes. As we move more into the electronic world of healthcare, nurse informaticists are going to have a huge role in that. I think that the unified voice, not just in legislation and being able to turn in that public comment, but to be sure the nurse's voice is heard as it relates back to the patient. Then we can be in agreement on the appropriate persons who need to be at that table and to be able to nominate those persons in a unified voice as well.

5. **In what way(s) is ANIA supporting ANI Initiatives e.g. the [ANI consumer pledge](), ANI Comments & Testimony, the Emerging Leader program, etc?**

   The one we have been the most involved in recently is the pledge to support the consumer e-health program. My predecessor felt ANIA needed to fully support this, so at the annual conference in April he had posters visible and handouts to support the program as well as handouts included in every participant's take-away bag. It is also something we have on our homepage, the entire toolkit, so even if you are not a member but land on our web site its not something you have to log in to do. Anyone who may access the website can make that pledge as a nurse. So it is something we do take seriously. I know that on a personal note this is something I have pushed with my children for some time, when they moved they had 18 years worth of records from their pediatrician to take with them. I also have my own PHR as well, so, on a personal level and on an organizational level we do back and support this program.

   ANIA has also been very involved with the Emerging Leaders program. Our former president, Curtis Dykes, mentored one of the first Emerging Leaders, and they also attended some of our Board meeting and Board retreats. They were part of our conference 3 years ago and did a poster presentation. They were exposed to leadership by shadowing our Board, and we thought that was important. All too often we give people a handbook and say "here go be a leader" and at least where I have worked that was the case. And that really just isn't how it can be done, so this is something we wanted to do by role-modeling with the Emerging Leaders. I would not be where I am at without mentors who took an interest and at least said you are doing a great job and I know you can keep it up. That meant so much to me, and we need to be offering that helping hand to those coming up behind us.

6. **What is ANIA's vision for the future of nursing informatics?**

   I think it goes all back to education. We have informatics competencies that should be taught in nursing schools. We have great educators out there who are teaching informatics and they need to be supported. We have those that are coming up in the ranks that will also need to support this.

   I think the networking part is very important, as well as just making sure they are able to stay on the cutting edge of the new technology and new knowledge. At the same time we need to grow our own Informaticists to make sure that we have education that can fit any nurse at any level. Even if he/she has been an Informaticist for 10 years or if he/she is not an Informaticist yet but

that they would like to be, they can have those kind of opportunities. There are other healthcare initiatives out there where nurses can learn online such as the HIT-PRO.org.   Something we have talked about (nothing formal yet) is to be able to, perhaps in the future, to provide scholarships for persons who may want to get into field of informatics, or if they can't afford to go to a conference to be able to offer some scholarship, for the best submission about why they want to work in informatics. This is a way to keep that networking going so that we can all be on the cutting edge of informatics, and even a step or two ahead so that we can be contributing to the healthcare movement as a whole instead of catching up with it.

Biography for Vicki Vallejos, BSN, RN-BC

Vicki Vallejos is a 1978 graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University with a Bachelors of Science in Nursing. She has worked in direct patient care as well as in management roles in many area of acute care as well as in home health in Oklahoma and Indiana. In 1995 Vicki was asked to serve as project manager for the installation of a home health clinical system that would be used for all clinical documentation as well as billing. She was responsible for much of the configuration as well as training staff how to use the new electronic record and also instructed staff how to use laptops during home visits.

Vicki transferred into Clark Memorial Hospital IT department as the first clinical analyst in 1997 and has since grown the clinical team from one to six nurses and five analysts that is responsible for all clinical systems design, configuration, install and training. Vicki created the Clinical Informatics Committee with representatives from all clinical areas who advise on system selections and enhancements. Vicki was elected to the ANIA board of directors in 2007 and is currently serving as its President. She continues in her role as Clinical Informatics manager at Clark Memorial Hospital in Jeffersonville, IN and is completing a Masters in Informatics.

Recorded: July 20, 2012

For full interview recording you can click here or visit http://www.allianceni.org/members.asp