

## DSU Health Information Technology AS Degree Celebrates 45 Years

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When the Health Information Technology program began at DSU, medical records were still paper documents. As technology evolved, so has the program. The HIM majors now prepare students to work with electronic health records, health information systems interoperability, data visualization and analytics, diagnosis and procedure coding, healthcare information privacy, clinical documentation improvement, and more.

This fall Dakota State is celebrating its beginning 45 years, with the creation of the [Health Information Technology](#) Associate Degree.

“Health information technology provides a strong foundation in health information management, preparing students for life-long careers and life-long learning,” said Dr. Renae Spohn, director of HIM programs/coordinator for Master of Science in Health Informatics and Information Management program.

The growing industry has seen merging healthcare organizations, changing payment models, and new offerings like telehealth services, Spohn shared. These changes and more have been integrated into the program.

Students learn about electronic health record and personal health record content and structure; healthcare information governance; access, disclosure, privacy and security of health information; healthcare data analytics; diagnosis and procedure coding; revenue cycle management; regulation compliance with HIPAA, CMS, The Joint Commission, etc.; and leadership.

As the program content evolved, so did the degree options. In addition to the associate degree, there are two undergraduate certificates, bachelor’s and master’s degrees, and a graduate certificate. Students can earn a [Health Care Coding Certificate](#), or a [Health Information Specialist Certificate](#) that can stack toward an associate degree in Health Information Technology, and a bachelor’s degree in [Health Information Administration](#). A [Health Care Data Analytics Graduate Certificate](#) is also available in addition to a [Master of Science in Health Informatics and Information Management](#) (MSHIIM).

“Students can achieve milestones by starting with a certificate program or associate degree and then adding the bachelor’s degree, 4+1 program, and MSHIIM, which can lead to a PhD in Information Systems with a Healthcare Information Systems specialization,” Spohn said. “DSU is very rare (one of two schools in the United States) in having three [CAHIIM](#)-accredited programs with the entire continuum of an associate, bachelors, and master’s degree. They are the only accredited Health Information Management programs in South Dakota”