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Why I Became a Certified Imaging Informatics Professional

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KNEW I WANTED to go into imaging informatics even before I entered the radiography program at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. I liked imaging informatics because its aim is to improve the efficiency, accuracy, usability and reliability of medical imaging services, which is a great service for patients and health care providers alike. To learn more about what these specialists do, I shadowed PACS coordinators at the Mayo Clinic. They explained that I'd have to meet specific eligibility criteria to take a test to become a certified imaging informatics professional.

Preparing myself for certification required significant dedication and persistence. I read books and studied online educational material on imaging informatics. I tapped the professionals I'd met at the Mayo Clinic during my shadowing sessions and asked them follow-up questions about the material. After I graduated from my radiography program, I worked a series of entry-level imaging informatics jobs and continued to take online classes to fill in the gaps in my knowledge. In 2012, I sat for the board exam and earned my CIIP. Now I maintain my certification by attending conferences, webinars and performing self-guided research.

Earning the CIIP shows vendors and health care providers that I'm committed to excellence and professional advancement. Additionally, it has helped me climb from entry-level roles to my current position as founder, president and chief executive officer for Vega Imaging Informatics. I can honestly say that making the choice to earn my CIIP has been the most important decision of my career.

Becoming Certified

The American Board of Imaging Informatics sets the certification standards for earning the CIIP designation. The ABII was founded in 2007 as a collaborative effort between the Society of Imaging Informatics in Medicine and the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists.

There is a seven-point qualification system for eligibility to take the CIIP exam. Aspiring imaging informatics professionals can earn points for experience, academic education, current certifications and continuing education. (It's important to note that points for current certifications will not be awarded as of Jan. 1, 2021.)

The ABII exam contains 150 multiple-choice questions covering 10 major knowledge domains in the field. It's based on information in the ABII Test Content Outline, which is regularly reviewed and updated to keep up with changes in technology and patient care. The cost is $500 to take the exam, and the retake fee is $250. According to the ABII website, the pass rate in 2018 was 85% for first-time applicants, and the re-take pass rate was 67%.

Benefits of Becoming a CIIP

Due to the growing reliance on technology to help automate and improve the quality of care in medical imaging practices, many organizations are looking for skilled imaging informatics professionals. Potential career paths in imaging informatics include radiology information systems and RIS/PACS administrator, imaging systems architect, application trainer and many more. One of the most significant benefits of earning a CIIP credential is the certification journey itself. Preparing for the exam is a self-driven development process, and the result is improved clinical outcomes and professionals who have a well-rounded understanding in their field.

I encourage any radiologic technologist with a passion for technology to consider specializing in imaging informatics. Visit abii.org for more information and to see whether the path to becoming certified aligns with your career goals. The choice to earn my CIIP certification changed my life for the better, and it could do the same for you! §

LUKE BIDEAUX *is the founder of Vega Imaging Informatics, a consulting agency offering managed services and software solutions related to imaging informatics. Luke is an advocate for the advancement of imaging informatics and serves as a member of the Imaging Informatics Professional Task Force for the Society of Imaging Informatics in Medicine. He joined ASRT in 2008.*