

## Spring 2011

### Issue Two



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### Q: Why is there a certification maintenance requirement for the CHAM and the CHAA?

A: The Certification Maintenance program upholds the objectives of NAHAM's credential program and our vision to promote lifelong learning.

Certification Maintenance strengthens the value of certification and demonstrates your ongoing commitment to excellence in the patient access services profession.

Fulfilling certification maintenance requirements is one way of demonstrating your efforts to maintain continuing competence in the field and your desire to keep your certification.

## 2011 CHAA & CHAM Certification Maintenance

### *The Who, What, When, and Where*

#### Certification Maintenance

Certified Healthcare Access Associates who earned their certification in an odd-numbered year (2005, 2007, 2009, etc.) are due to recertify during the month of April 2011. Certified Healthcare Access Managers will recertify during the month of June 2011.

On both applications certificants must declare that they have earned, at a minimum, the required number of continuing education hours. CHAA's additionally must provide verification from a supervisor that they have worked the minimum number of required hours in a position relevant to patient access services.

The CHAA certification maintenance fee is \$25. The CHAM maintenance fee is \$50 for NAHAM members and \$100 for non-members. Fulfilling certification maintenance requirements extends the valid date of the CHAA credential through April 30, 2013 and the CHAM credential through June 30, 2013.

**Please Note: NAHAM will not ask you for your CEU hours unless you are audited. If you are audited, NAHAM will send you an e-mail with further details.**

#### Contact Hours

NAHAM defines a contact hour as one clock hour (60 minutes) of a valid educational activity.

There are many ways to earn contact hours valid towards CHAM and CHAA maintenance including education at one's own place of work, volunteer service, education offered through NAHAM and our affiliate associations, and more. [CHAAs and CHAMs may reference the contact hour guide, available here:](#)

#### **How do I track contact hours?**

In order to make this process as simple as possible, NAHAM has developed an interactive *Contact Hour Tracking Tool*. This spreadsheet includes instructions, examples of tracked contact hours, and a template for you to track your own educational and professional development activities.

[Simply click here and navigate through the worksheets](#) (there are three total, located on tabs at the bottom of the spreadsheet).

**If you are ever unsure about a contact hour, please don't hesitate to contact NAHAM.**



## Examination Day: How to prepare and what to expect...

Whether this is your first year in the Patient Access field or twenty-first, examination day can be stressful and full of questions. Knowing how to prepare and what to expect when you walk in to take any examination is crucial, and NAHAM wants to make sure you're prepared!

Some tips for examination preparation:

- Maintain a positive attitude! Think about doing well and staying relaxed and comfortable. Eat a light meal ahead of time. You don't want a growling stomach to affect your concentration.
- Make sure you have been in contact with your proctor *prior* to examination day. In advance of the examination NAHAM will have emailed your proctor the Candidate ID and Passcode that you will use to log you into the examination. Knowing that your proctor is expecting you and has your information is a must!

What to expect from NAHAM before the examination:

- NAHAM sends by email to every candidate approximately two weeks before the examination with a "NAHAM Candidate Memorandum". This document will explain everything from the number to call in case of a test emergency, as well as do's and don'ts, can's and can not's during examination administration. We encourage you to read this email **thoroughly**. It puts you and your proctor on the same page for examination day and provides you with important information regarding what to expect after you have completed the examination.

*If you ever have any questions regarding the status of your application or you/your proctor have not received your information, contact NAHAM immediately and we will be happy to re-send this information.*



## NAHAM 37th Annual Educational Conference

Coming to San Antonio in 2011, the NAHAM Conference will provide up **22 contact hours** to attendees who take part in a wide array of activities including Learning Labs, the Access Solutions Marketplace, top-notch keynote speakers, and special pre-conference Symposia. Visit [www.naham.org/conference](http://www.naham.org/conference) for all the latest information and to register today!

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## CHAA Spotlight:

### Cynthia Putnam, CHAA

Patient Access Specialist

Wyoming Medical Center

Casper, Wyoming

CHAA since May 23, 2007



Are you interested in being profiled in an upcoming issue of CertAlert?

Do you have colleagues who you feel deserve recognition in an upcoming CHAA or CHAM spotlight?

Contact [info@naham.org](mailto:info@naham.org) and tell us who you would like to see profiled in an upcoming issue.

NAHAM Staff will contact selected certificants to confirm participation, and conduct interviews.

#### What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?

This certification process was presented to us by our leadership.

#### What is the most rewarding aspect of having the CHAA?

I always tried to act as a professional, now I have the knowledge of a professional and a certificate.

#### Would you recommend NAHAM to others? Specifically earning a credential through NAHAM?

Yes. This program had excellent material for me to use to study with. The online testing process was simple and user friendly. I had my results BEFORE I left the testing area. No stress waiting for days or weeks!!

#### Was earning a credential in healthcare something you aspired to?

I was unaware of any programs to obtain profession credentials before this.

#### What were your reasons for seeking certification?

This certification was brought to us by our Team leaders. The first goal was to have our knowledge level increased; the benefit to that was a pay bonus and pay grade increase as well.

#### How does certification distinguish you from other patient access healthcare professionals?

The education behind the certificate gives me knowledge and confidence and tools to help my patients.

#### What did you expect the certification process to be like?

HARD. This was the "beginning of the end" of my normal role of a Patient Registration Clerk. Instead of just being "the lady that asks if you have insurance," I have a bigger purpose. I am able to help MY patients through the whole process. But, in saying that, this information and concepts were totally new and overwhelming. Thank goodness it was in a language I could understand, learn and apply. I even said to my management that this should be given to new clerks as part of their training. Begin the road of "clerk" to "specialist"

#### Was the NAHAM Certification process what you expected?

We didn't know what to expect. We were all freaking out! The process was great, made sense and had nothing shocking in it.

#### What have been the rewards of earning your credential?

Increase in wages. Increased knowledge in an ever changing healthcare environment. Increase in professional attitude and productivity.

#### What advice would you give those seeking to earn their credential?

DO IT!! It does not just benefit you, it benefits your patients.

*From the top! Cindy leads Patient Access at Wyoming Medical Center as one of the first to receive her CHAA. She has used her extensive knowledge to mentor and encourage her peers to strive for exceptional quality. Her expertise and experience extends well beyond Patient Access. I'm so proud of Cindy's accomplishments and fortunate to have her as part of our Patient Access team for 25 years.*



## CHAM Spotlight:

### Lori Thompson, CHAM

Patient Access Manager

Allegan General Hospital

Allegan, Michigan

CHAM since May 2, 2005



#### What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?

I was interested in a way to continually educate and certify myself in the Patient Access world, and to find the same education and certification for my staff. NAHAM provides this education to both me and my staff.

#### What is the most rewarding aspect of having the CHAM?

The people that I come in contact with at the state wide groups, the connections with people at other facilities I have gained as a result of my certification, the confidence in the information that comes my way as a result my certification and membership in NAHAM. The pride in knowing that I am part of a bigger picture of Patient Access Managers; our certifications say more than we are educated. We are competent with the most up to date information related to the Patient Access world.

#### Would you recommend NAHAM to others? Specifically earning a credential through NAHAM?

Yes, I do all the time. I encourage my staff and others to be certified. At Allegan General Hospital I have a staff of fourteen; eleven of whom are certified, with three additional Radiology Scheduling staff that earned their CHAA certification this past year. Why? The CHAA and CHAM certifications speak to the integrity of the person holding the certification, their commitment to excellence in Patient Access, their commitment to more than just a job but to a desire for a career, their commitment to themselves, their coworkers, their facility, and to the patient to know and understand all they can about Patient Access and the revenue cycle and their personal responsibility in the revenue cycle.

#### How does certification distinguish you from other patient access healthcare professionals?

The CHAA and CHAM certifications tell me the individual knows what they are doing in the Patient Access world, they are committed to excellence and continued Revenue Cycle education.

#### Was the NAHAM Certification process what you expected?

After going through the study guide, Yes. I was nervous when I first applied for the CHAA, I studied and passed the exam. Then when I took the CHAM in 2005 I was even more nervous, I knew it would be challenging, I also knew from having taken the previous CHAA exam there would be topics I wasn't as familiar with as others. Because of that I had the opportunity to collaborate with other leaders on the information I needed in order to pass the CHAM, this proved to be ongoing collaboration and mentoring over the following years.

#### What have been the rewards of earning your credential?

I have a greater sense of personal confidence in my career choice and my abilities. Confidence that I am in the right direction and have created an atmosphere at my facility to keep myself and my staff accountable for continued Patient Access education. Increased respect from my senior leadership, my peers, and staff, networking galore, and increased pay!

#### What advice would you give those seeking to earn their credential?

Don't wait! Today is the perfect day to explore how NAHAM's Credentialing opportunity can work for you, your staff, facility and your patients.

#### What does your hospital's executive management think of your earning of the CHAM credential?

My senior leader is pleased as punch that I have obtained and maintain the CHAM certification and that I encourage staff to do so also. With the support of senior leaders I am able to be progressive in Patient Access and to lead my staff by example. The CHAM and CHAA certification is direct support in paving the way to remaining progressive in our processes. I believe the personal satisfaction the staff has gained is part of the benefits of the CHAA certification process. Successively, the clerical ladder was directly correlated to my staff being involved in voting our facility as a 'Modern Healthcare' Top 100 Places to work in the nation. I am honored to be a CHAM certified member of NAHAM and a leader in Patient Access at Allegan General Hospital!



## Facility Spotlight:

# Baptist Memorial Health Care Corporation

Memphis, Tennessee



*Regarded as one of the premier health care systems in the nation, Baptist Memorial Health Care is an award-winning network dedicated to providing compassionate, high-quality care for patients. With 14 affiliate hospitals throughout the Mid-South, Baptist combines convenience with excellence of care—two reasons Baptist has been named among the top health care systems in the country for several years.*

*NAHAM thanks System Director of Corporate Registration, Liz Tucker, CHAM, at Baptist Memorial Health Care Corporation for her contribution to this Facility Spotlight. Please visit the website*

### **What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?**

NAHAM's dedication to the field of Access Management and the job relevant content of the Certified Healthcare Access Associate Program.

### **What aspect of working with NAHAM have you enjoyed the most?**

The NAHAM staff are always professional and responsive. NAHAM ensures the study guides and test questions are continuously updated to keep up with the many changes in Access Management.

### **What are the benefits to your employees?**

The staff are more confident and have a better understanding of their role. They also receive a salary increase upon completion of the program.

### **How is the patient access healthcare profession changing?**

Patient identification systems (biometrics) are key to ensure the correct patient is selected from the Master Patient Index and for identification and prevention of Identity Theft. There has also been an increased focus on data integrity to ensure the

data is accurate across all systems and meets data reporting requirements. The standard registration guidelines are also changing to support online documentation.

### **Do you see credentialing as being mandatory for hospital patient access workers in the future?**

It has certainly been a success at our facilities.

### **What benefits does certification bring to your hospital?**

The registration staff have a better understanding of their role and responsibilities in the Revenue Process. They also have a better understanding of Federal Regulations that impact the access areas.

### **Do you believe having credentials will help employees adjust to changes in healthcare?**

Yes, they have acquired the perfect foundation to build upon.

### **How do you believe having credentialed professionals will benefit your hospital?**

Completion of the certification program improves the skills and knowledge of the staff. The certification program has also helped with the professional image of staff.

### **How do you believe having credentialed professionals will benefit the healthcare industry?**

Staff would already be knowledgeable of the registration standards (Patient Satisfaction, Revenue process, UB 04 requirements, Insurance guidelines, Collections, JCAHO requirements and HIPAA compliance).

### **Please provide any additional comments that you would like to share.**

Certification of the Registration staff within 15 months of hire has been a requirement at our hospitals since 2002. The program has been very successful for us.

Have your hospital highlighted in an upcoming issue of **CertAlert!**

Contact us at [info@naham.org](mailto:info@naham.org) and tell us why your facility should be profiled in an upcoming issue.



## Dates to Remember...

- **March 31, 2011**

All Certified Healthcare Access Associates due to renew their certification in 2011 need to have all requirements met by this day. View page 1 for requirements.

- **April 1 - April 30, 2011**

All Certified Healthcare Access Associates who are renewing their certification must file their maintenance paperwork between April 1 and April 30, 2011

- **May 1, 2011**

Deadline to sign-up for the CHAA & CHAM written examination at NAHAM's 2011 Annual Conference in San Antonio, TX

- **May 24 - 27, 2011**

NAHAM's 37th Annual Educational Conference & Exposition ([www.naham.org/conference](http://www.naham.org/conference)).  
*Earn up to 22 contact hours!*

- **May 31, 2011**

- All Certified Healthcare Access Managers due to recertify in 2011 need to have all requirements met by this day. View page 1 for requirements.

- Deadline to sign-up for July 2011 examination administration period.

- **June 1 - June 30, 2011**

All Certified Healthcare Access Managers due to renew their certification must file their maintenance paperwork between June 1 and June 30, 2011.

Remember: We are happy to let our CertAlert readers know about your event!

Send the special date and/or reminder you would like NAHAM to include in this section, to [info@naham.org](mailto:info@naham.org) or give us a call at (202) 367-1125.

**naham** National Association of Healthcare Access Management *The leading resource for managing successful patient access services.*

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**NAHAM 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Educational Conference & Exposition**  
May 24 – 27, 2011  
Grand Hyatt San Antonio, San Antonio, TX

**Welcome to our Online Community!**

Welcome to NAHAM's new online member community! We hope you will explore the various features our new web site has to offer. We created this online space for you to log on and create a dynamic profile, collaborate on projects, share your ideas and expertise – and, most importantly, to connect with your fellow members.

Share, collaborate, exchange and grow – that's why we're here and we hope you are too. Engage and explore anytime, from anywhere there's a web connection.

We're glad you're here!

**SIGN IN**

Username: skemp  
Password: [REDACTED]  
 Remember Me

**SIGN IN** [lock icon]

[Forgot your password?](#)  
[Haven't registered yet?](#)

**UPCOMING EVENTS** MORE

4/3/2011 » 4/9/2011  
National Healthcare Access Personnel Week

5/24/2011 » 5/27/2011  
NAHAM 37th Annual Conference & Exposition

10/24/2011 » 10/25/2011  
Northeast Regional Conference

### New NAHAM Web Site Coming Soon!

#### New features to include:

- Groups
- Create your own mini web pages
- Upload photos
- Connect easily with peers
- NAHAM Knowledgebase

*And much more!*