

REFLECTIONS



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President's Letter

Christine Ifft, CRCE

Wow! What a beautiful spring here in the Three Rivers area (yes, mixed in with a little lingering snow, but hey – we are Western PA! From 87 degrees one day to snow just two days later – gotta love it!). The landscape is turning green and lush again and with that, it literally brings a breath of fresh air!

Your new board met in March for a meet and greet and figure out where we can take our Chapter this year! It was great to finally get together and start planning actual in person meetings for a change! We enjoyed the in-person fellowship (after everyone finally got to the right place as I had a moment and gave out the wrong address for the meeting!) and started to plan out the year!

With that said, I am pleased to announce that our first in person/virtual hybrid meeting was held on Friday, April 8th. It was the first time we have met in person since our Christmas of 2019 meeting – crazy to think it has been that long! The speakers were fantastic, and our in-person participation was pleasing considering it was the first one in so long! And how fun to have our virtual folks online with us! We had a few technical difficulties at first but were able to work them out quickly and continue with our presentations. We were even able to offer virtual 50/50 tickets via PayPal! I hope that those of you that attended concur that it was a success!

Speaking of the 50/50 – yours truly somehow lucked out and won the raffle drawing! Since our proceeds were going to the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank, I decided to donate my winnings back to the pot to add to the donation! It's all about paying it forward! And to add right on to that – I would like to thank our generous Three Rivers AAHAM sponsor, Charles Hilton of Charles J. Hilton & Associates, P.C. for sponsoring our after-conference networking event!

We have been hard at work trying to plan more hybrid events. We are still partnering with our fellow chapters in Pennsylvania to offer some joint meetings/webinars and we have recently started talking to the Western Reserve Chapter in Ohio to resurrect that partnership. As some of you may remember, we partnered with them a few years back to do our Fall Conference at Nemaquin.

Our membership has remained steady which is good news and bad news! While we are so thankful for those of you who continue to find value in your membership and renew each year, we would like to increase our membership. We were able to offer a great opportunity at the beginning of our campaign to welcome back old members and to get new members to join by presenting a buy one, get one free offering. I was very happy to see that some of you took advantage of that generous deal!

I would invite all of you to spread the word about AAHAM and specifically our Chapter and point them to our website to join!

I would like to take an opportunity to remind you of the many benefits of becoming certificated and encourage you to take a minute to really think about how this would help you with your career. It is an investment in your personal growth and your professional future! Certification validates your knowledge of the revenue cycle and job specific competencies. It provides industry recognition along with a personal challenge, self-satisfaction, professional development, and individual enrichment. Certification demonstrates proficiency in your job, commitment to your profession and your career.

This paragraph will be a staple in my letters. I am going to ask you all to get engaged with our Chapter. To join a committee, sit in on a Board meeting, ask questions, make suggestions, and become certified. **We currently have openings to chair our Education committee, our Certification committee and our Membership committee.** We would love to hear what you have to say, get fresh ideas, and have you involved! We will have a lot of opportunities for you to become involved and to continue our succession plan, building up Three Rivers and setting it up for success for our future members. I implore you to get involved to allow our region of Pennsylvania to stay strong and allow us to offer the great education and networking opportunities that has benefited us all in some capacity. We want to pave the way for our future Revenue Cycle colleagues! Thank you for those of you who already have committed to helping! We couldn't do it without you!

Thank you as always to our awesome sponsors as we definitely couldn't do it without your support! It is very much appreciated! Please make sure that you take a minute to visit our website for the links to go out and visit our trusted sponsors and see what they have to offer!

Please make sure you follow Three Rivers AAHAM and National AAHAM on social media for up-to-date information. Three Rivers is on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for your convenience.

Looking forward to a fresh and revitalized 2022! So far, we are on track to make that happen within our AAHAM Three Rivers Chapter!

Stay safe, stay well!

Christine Ifft, CRCE | Three Rivers AAHAM Chapter President

NATIONAL CALENDAR

May 16-20, 2022 - May 2022 exams

May 18, 2022 - AAHAM webinar

May 31, 2022 - Scholarship Application Deadline

June 20-24, 2022 - June 2022 exams

July 25-29, 2022 - July 2022 exams

July 31, 2022 - Bill Spare National AAHAM Recognition Award Nomination Deadline

August 22-26, 2022 - August 2022 exams

September 19-23, 2022 - September 2022 exams

October 12-14, 2022 - 2022 Annual National Institute, Baltimore, Maryland

October 17-21, 2022 - October 2022 exams

November 14-18, 2022 - November 2022 exams

December 12-16, 2022 - December 2022 exams

December 31, 2022 - Legislative Award Submission Deadline

Join our AAHAM Social Network Platform and have access to over 3,000 healthcare revenue cycle professionals.

Make sure to visit our new AAHAM Social Network, <https://aaham.mn.co/> and request an invite or download the Mighty Networks App from iTunes or the Google play store and join on your mobile device!

*Post a question and have access to your peers from across the country.
An easy and free benefit for all AAHAM members!*

*If you have any questions, please email
Moayad Zahraiddin at Moayad@aaham.org.*



Avoiding Five Common Financial Assistance Program Pitfalls

Nick McLaughlin

Some may argue that the biggest pitfall of hospital financial assistance programs is that many in the general population are unaware of their existence in the first place. That may be true, but lack of awareness is not the only problem.

Hospitals are pillars of their communities, integral to the fabric of society. But, like every other institution, hospitals face challenges with things like budget decisions and staffing issues. Trust is key, and it needs to be reciprocal.

We, the community, want to receive the best care possible, and hospitals want to provide that care. They don't want to be in the bill collection business any more than patients want to be in the medical debt business.

Hospital financial assistance programs can go a long way toward making life easier for all parties. But awareness of these programs is paramount. Here are five easily avoidable pitfalls that commonly plague hospital financial assistance programs.

1. Don't create an over-complicated application form

The longer something is, the less likely someone is going to read it. Keep financial assistance applications closer in size to a blog post than, say, War & Peace. One or two pages is sufficient, and don't waste space on instructions.

Limit the questions to only those that directly impact eligibility and those that help you receive reimbursement. For example, ask for assets information so you can claim Medicare bad debt reimbursement due to indigence.

2. Don't include outdated or irrelevant questions

It doesn't take long these days for things to become outdated. Everything evolves, so constantly reusing the same application form from years past just doesn't cut it.

Information like the make, model and value of your vehicle, your monthly expenses, and whether or not you are a US citizen don't belong on the application. Also, formerly applicable questions may reference programs that have expired. Keep everything up to date.

3. Don't install too many steps on the sliding scale

Calculations of the federal poverty line are not precise, and too many discount percentages only serve to complicate matters for patients. Don't forget: These patients are in the hospital for a reason. Adding headaches and complications to these situations should be the last thing anyone wants to do.

Keep it to three simple steps. 1. You have free care up to X%. 2. You have a _% discount from X% to Y%. 3. You have a _% discount from Y% to Z%. No surprises.

4. Don't sabotage eligibility requirements

Follow the American Hospital Association's patient billing guidelines. Patients are eligible for free care up to 200 percent of the federal poverty line.

And if you consider assets, limit the request to non-retirement liquid assets and non-primary residence real estate.

5. Eligible patients don't know financial assistance is available

Being 501(r)-compliant isn't good enough. Hospitals need to make it easy and inexpensive to connect patients to financial assistance. Make paperless and self-serve options the standard. Ask yourself at each step, is this user-friendly for the patient and user-friendly for hospital staff.

Finally, please don't fear "leaving money on the table" with patients eligible for financial assistance. I used to work in collections. Trust me, your hospital isn't going to lose any revenue by promoting financial assistance, and you will be a much greater corporate citizen as a result.

Medical billing is a two-way street, and it doesn't have to be the road to ruin. Helping and enabling patients to pay their bills is good for them and the hospital. After all, what's better than a clean bill of health, and a clean bill?

Nick McLaughlin is CEO and Founder of Breez, a company committed to eliminating medical debt by streamlining hospital financial assistance programs.

Board Fun Facts



Taran Lee, Secretary

My high school marching band was in the Guinness book of world records.



Brenda Fraas, Certification Chair

I went to school to become a Court Stenographer but couldn't get past 220 words a minute and needed 240 so I opted to become an Executive Secretary at Bell Telephone.



Alyshia Ravida, Vice President

I love to trout fish in the spring with my husband! I can hook up my bait and take off my own fish too!



Chuck Hilton, Legal Counsel

I'm an avid gardener!



Lisa Hennigan, Certification

My youngest nephew is getting married this month, in Ireland @ Dunluce Castle on the Northern Coast. That is a destination wedding!



Matt Keeney, Communications Chair

I bowled my first 200 game when I was 10 years old.



Christine Ifft, President

I love to target and skeet shoot and am a pretty good marksman! I usually beat everyone in my family.



Ken Krieger, Government Relations

I still don't know what I want to be when I grow up



Tessa King, Treasurer

I love animals and foster puppies through Cross Your Paws Rescue.

CERTIFICATION CORNER

Brenda Fraas, CRCE

AAHAM certification is an investment in your personal growth and our professional future. Earning an AAHAM certification demonstrates a high level of achievement and distinguishes you as a leader and role model in the revenue cycle industry. Testing and certification levels have changed over the years. In the past, you had to submit your application to take the exam by paper, now you can register online with a click of a button. When I started studying for the CPAM (Certified Patient Account Management) exam back in 2007, I had to lug around a huge binder everywhere I went in case I had some time to read and study. The exam was in-person and completed with paper, pen and a calculator in hand. When I finished the exam after the full 8 hours, I sat in my car for a half hour because I was so mentally exhausted I couldn't think about driving home on the parkway! I received my CPAM certification on 4/26/08 and will make sure I do everything within my power to continue receiving CEUs (Continuing Education Units) so I never have to retake the exam again! Remember that once your certification is revoked or your membership is terminated, members are required to retake the entire examination to become re-certified.

Did you know AAHAM offers five levels of certification options to help advance your career?

- The AAHAM Certified Revenue Cycle Executive (CRCE, formerly known as CPAM)
- The AAHAM Certified Revenue Cycle Professional (CRCP)
- The AAHAM Certified Revenue Integrity Professional (CRIP)
- The AAHAM Certified Revenue Cycle Specialist (CRCS)
- The AAHAM Certified Compliance Technician (CCT)

There's a certification level to fit your needs. It does not matter whether you are new to the healthcare revenue cycle, or a seasoned veteran, our certification exams offer a complete career ladder. In this edition, I will focus on the CRCE and the CRCP certification levels and in the next newsletter, I will provide more information on CRIP, CRCS and CCT. If you have any questions or would like more information, please reach out to me at fraasbl@yahoo.com.



WHAT IS THE AAHAM CRCE (EXECUTIVE) CERTIFICATION?

Executive Certification is an extensive online proctored exam directed to all senior and executive leaders within the healthcare revenue cycle industry, to help equip them for strategic management of the business. This certification possesses the highest level of difficulty combining content knowledge of the business with critical thinking and communication skills. ****National AAHAM membership required****

Eligibility

CRCE exams are available to National AAHAM members, in good standing. The applicant must have a minimum of four (4) years of experience in a healthcare related field. A two (2) year associate degree or a degree from an accredited university or college can be substituted for two (2) years of experience. When using an educational waiver for experience, a transcript copy must accompany the application.

CRCE Sections

Sections included in the CRCE exams include:

CRCE Sections

1. Patient Access
2. Billing
3. Credit/Collections
4. Revenue Cycle Management

Exam Preparation

AAHAM certification examinations require comprehensive working knowledge of patient account management, financial operations, information systems, governmental regulations and policies that govern revenue cycle procedures. However, hands-on experience is not sufficient; candidates will need to enhance and refresh their knowledge through independent and group study programs. Participation in study opportunities provided by your local chapter and/or the national organization is highly recommended.

Study opportunities include:

- A downloadable CRCE study outline included in the CRCE exam fee. The study outline can also be purchased separately.
- A CRCE online practice exam is offered to assist in identifying your strengths and weaknesses to help focus your study efforts.
- In-depth training webinars available as Mp4 downloads cover each section of the exam. See the link above to access the order form.
- Training and coaching opportunities are offered by local AAHAM chapters. If you are interested in a training session, please reach out to Christine Ifft or Brenda Fraas.

Recertification:

- To retain executive certification, the member must earn forty (40) hours of continuing education units (CEUs) within the designated two-year certification period. Twenty (20) CEUs must result from attendance at AAHAM sponsored events.

Exam Frequency:

- The exams are offered on a monthly basis.

WHAT IS THE AAHAM CRCP (PROFESSIONAL) CERTIFICATION?

Professional Certification is an online proctored exam directed to supervisors and managers in the revenue cycle industry, to validate their knowledge and skills. This certification is for the individual who desires confirmation and recognition of their expertise and/or for those who aspire to the executive level certification. ****National AAHAM membership required****

Eligibility

CRCP exams are available to National AAHAM members in good standing. The applicant must have a minimum of two (2) years of experience in a healthcare-related field or a two (2) year associate degree or a degree from an accredited university or college. A copy of your transcripts must accompany the application when using your education to meet the requirement.

CRCP Sections

CRCP Sections

1. Patient Access
2. Billing
3. Credit/Collections
4. Revenue Cycle Management

Exam Preparation

AAHAM certification examinations require comprehensive working knowledge of patient account management, governmental regulations and policies that govern revenue cycle procedures. However, hands-on experience is not sufficient; candidates will need to enhance and refresh their knowledge through independent and group study programs. Participation in study opportunities provided by your local chapter and/or the national organization is highly recommended.

Study opportunities include:

- A downloadable CRCP study outline included in the CRCP exam fee. The study outline can also be purchased separately.
- A comprehensive CRCP Exam Study Manual is available for purchase. The manual is designed to assist you in studying for the CRCP certification as chapters correspond to each section of the exams, with material targeted and geared toward exam questions. It features knowledge checks (practice questions) to help gauge your progress.
- Training and coaching opportunities are offered by local AAHAM chapters.

Recertification:

- To retain CRCP certification, the member must earn thirty (30) hours of continuing education units (CEUs) within the designated two-year certification period. Twenty (20) CEUs must result from attendance at AAHAM sponsored events.

Exam Frequency:

- The exams are offered on a monthly basis.

CERTIFICATION CORNER

Brenda Fraas, CRCE

More information to come in the next edition of our newsletter on these 3 certifications:

AAHAM CRIP (Revenue Integrity Professional) certification

The Revenue Integrity Professional (CRIP) is an online proctored exam directed to anyone in the revenue cycle industry to help ensure that facilities effectively manage their charge master, and bill and document appropriately for all services rendered to a patient. This certification requires an in-depth, working knowledge of various revenue cycle areas and proper skill sets needed to increase revenue and reimbursement for facilities. It also ensures that proper charging takes place to maintain compliance within the insurance payer programs.

AAHAM CRCS (Specialist) certification

Specialist certification is an online proctored exam that tests the proficiency of staff involved in the processing of patient accounts and to prepare them for the many details needed to perform their daily job duties.

AAHAM CCT (Compliance) certification

Compliance certification is an online proctored exam that thoroughly tests competencies in healthcare compliance for all staff involved in the processing of patient accounts. It is intended to meet the annual employee compliance training requirements and to support individuals with professional compliance responsibilities in both institutional (hospital, health system) and professional (physician, clinic) settings.

UPCOMING CERTIFICATION EXAM DATES FOR 2022

June 20-24, 2022

June 2022 exams

July 25-29, 2022

July 2022 exams

August 22-26, 2022

August 2022 exams

September 19-23, 2022

September 2022 exams

October 17-21, 2022

October 2022 exams

November 14-18, 2022

November 2022 exams

December 12-16, 2022

December 2022 exams

**** Applications to take an exam are due in to the AAHAM office 30 days prior to a testing period.**



Government Relations Corner

Ken Krieger

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR AAHAM'S 17TH ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE DAY

The 2022 Legislative Day will be held June 21-22 at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Represent your facility, our state and your industry at the one political event that directly impacts you, your facility and your bottom-line: AAHAM Legislative Day. Our strong grassroots program creates new opportunities for our industry but we need your continued support! We need you to make the trip to Washington to make a difference in our industry! Attendance is limited, so register today. It is all about strength in numbers. The more AAHAM members participate in this effort, the stronger the voice AAHAM will have. Remember, if you don't speak up someone else will.

This year's topics include

- Surprise Billing
- Prior Authorization
- Medical Debt Reporting H.R. 3173

When grassroots advocates from around the nation unite, shaping healthcare policy becomes more effective. Once registration is received, National will schedule meetings with your Senators and Representatives.

Although the idea of meeting with elected officials may seem daunting, remember, your elected officials work for you!

AAHAM's annual Legislative Day, brings you face-to-face with the decision-makers in Washington who determine the outcome of our industry's top legislative priorities.

Plan on arriving on Tuesday, June 21, 2022, in time for a special briefing on our topic and a welcome reception at the hotel. On Wednesday morning, join top Washington insider speakers for a delicious breakfast in your honor, followed by great speakers! After a networking lunch, scheduled meetings with members of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives pre-arranged by AAHAM will occur to allow you to voice your concerns about issues impacting our industry and your states. Afterwards, there will be a reception and debriefing session to review the day's events with other attendees. See the attentive agenda:

| Tuesday, June 21, 2022 | |
|---|--|
| 3:30pm - 4:30pm | Registration |
| 4:30pm - 5:00pm | *Welcome and Introduction to Legislative Day and overview of AAHAM positions at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill |
| 5:00pm - 7:00pm | "Coming Back Together" networking reception |
| <i>*A recorded session on What to Expect from Your Hill Visits as well as the talking points for each topic will be held on Wednesday, June 15, 2022 for those who can attend. The recorded sessions will be sent to all registered attendees to view at their convenience.</i> | |
| Wednesday, June 22, 2022 | |
| 8:00am - 8:30am | Breakfast and welcome at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill |
| 8:30am - 11:30am | Speaker presentations |
| 11:30am - 12:30pm | Networking lunch at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill |
| 12:30pm - 5:00pm | Pre-arranged roundtable visits with members of the House of Representatives and Senate at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill |
| 5:00pm - 6:00pm | "Coming Back Together" networking reception and closing debriefing session |

You will earn 8 AAHAM CEUs for attending Leg Day. More information to come on this year's event via e-mails.

If you have any questions, please reach out to me at Ken.krieger@whitespacehealth.com.



17th Annual Legislative Day Coming Back Together

JUNE 21-22, 2022

Hyatt Regency Washington
on Capitol Hill
Washington, D.C.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Brenda Fraas

My current job title
Revenue Cycle Director



I work for UPMC
Corporate

My go-to karaoke song:



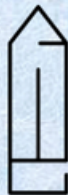
That's What Friends are For

The *best* book I've ever read is:

Anything written by Danielle Steel



If I were a crayon, I would be *any shade of red.*



Best part of my job is..



Working with MY TEAM.

Favorite Quotes



"Everything happens for a reason."

"Look forward with confidence and back without regret."

One thing on my bucket list is:



- 1. Vacationing in Montana.**
- 2. Going cross-country in an RV to visit all the national parks.**

My Favorite



Type of music is

I listen to just about every genre, but if I have to pick one, then

Country!



Per day

Cups of coffee

HOBBY LOBBY



My favorite thing to do in my free time is...

Camping and vacations with family and friends.

