

REFLECTIONS

PENNSYLVANIA THREE RIVERS AAHAM | FALL NEWSLETTER | OCTOBER 2024



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President's Letter

Alyshia Ravida, Chapter President

School is back in session and the leaves are starting to change color—one of my favorite times of the year! There is a lot going on at the chapter level and the national level for AAHAM.

Our Fall Conference on September 5-6 was fantastic. Kudos to Sharon Taube, our Education Chair, as well as our Education Committee for a fantastic educational event. It was great to try out a new venue and bring in more members that are local!

In 2024, I can't tell you enough about how important it is to stay connected with AAHAM. Locally, the chapter helps members stay in tune with what is going on with our local state government, education that pertains to all revenue cycle professionals, opportunities for certification, as well as education on payers specific to the western Pennsylvania region. On the national level, the organization works to build education more broadly and address common issues faced on the provider level.

Since COVID, membership on the chapter and national level has declined. We need our members, who value what the organization offers, to continue to bring more revenue cycle professionals to our organization, both locally and nationally.

We want our organization to continue serving its members for many more years and self-promotion of the organization is necessary for its continued success.

I'd challenge all of you to bring a friend with you to one of our future events! Share with them all that you love and enjoy about being involved in AAHAM. Check out our certification programs online to see what certification best fits your role. And get involved with the local chapter! We need more great volunteers like yourself to continue our success!

Sincerely,
Alyshia Ravida
Chapter President, PA Three Rivers AAHAM

Thank You Sponsors!

Christine Ifft, Sponsor Chair

We wanted to take a minute and thank our wonderful sponsors yet again—because, seriously, we could never thank them enough for all they do for our Chapter!

We had a nice showing of vendor exhibits at our Fall conference and hopefully, everyone learned all about what services/products they offer! We hope you hung on to your sponsor passports to refer to and to talk with your decision-makers about their offerings!

Please remember our sponsors when you have an opportunity to do an RFP for a needed service, or if you are looking to resolve an issue that maybe they could help with! Did you know a lot of them will do short-term projects? Our vendors are our trusted partners! A special thank you to the following:

Welcome Reception



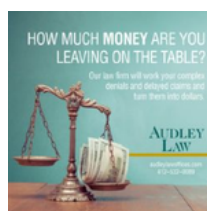
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Pennsylvania Three Rivers AAHAM

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Silver Sponsors



Bronze Sponsors



Scholarship



2024 Fall Conference

Alyshia Ravid & Christine Ifft



Christine providing the next Trivia question



Discussing the Trivia question



Kim Raftery and Lisa Hennigan



Fall '24 Networking event



Fall '24 Speaker Chad Wallace



Lisa Hennigan and Sharon Taube



Fall '24 Speaker Dan Mullholland



2024 Fall Conference

Christine Ifft, Sponsor Chair

Let's all show a huge appreciation for the wonderful prizes that were donated by our Sponsors and some of our Board members for our Fall Conference!

DONATED BY	ITEM	PROVIDER WINNER
AAHAM Board of Directors	\$50 Visa Gift Card	Christine Ifft
AAHAM Board of Directors	Free Winter Meeting	Laurie Steffy
Alyshia Ravida	31 Tote	Amy Garcia
Alyshia Ravida	31 Tote	Taran Lee
Americollect	\$50 Visa Gift Card	Erica Methven
Americollect	\$50 Amazon Gift Card	Lisa Hennigan
Audley Law Offices	It's 5 o'clock Somewhere basket	Jenelle Peterman
BDO	Duffle Bag	Paula Lavery
BDO	Champagne Magnum	Patricia Reick
Brenda Fraas	\$50 Amazon Gift Card	Brianna Hinch
CAC	\$50 Amazon Gift Card	Laura Moss
CAC	Grey Goose Magnum	Julie Rusch
Christine Ifft	Chocolates and Wine	Aly Ferris
Hilton Law Office	Wine Assortment	Matthew Keeney
Hollis Cobb	Yeti Cooler	Christine Ifft
HRSI	Steelers Embroidered Cooler	Brenda Fraas
KeyMed	Candy Jar Guessing Game	Taran Lee
KeyMed	Kate Spade Mini Backpack	Mary Carol Limegrover
Penn Credit	\$100 Lowes Gift Card	Juline Fenton
Revco	\$50 Visa Gift Card	Kelly Huey
Revco	\$50 Visa Gift Card	Erica Methven
Revco	\$50 Visa Gift Card	Jenelle Peterman

Our 50/50 Winner was Erica Methven. \$125 to her, \$125 to our scholarship fund!

PA Three Rivers Volunteering at Global Links



From L to R: Erica Methven, Sara Carroll, Alyshia Ravida, Brenda Fraas, Matthew Keeney

Pennsylvania Three Rivers AAHAM Winter Meeting

Save the Date!

*Pennsylvania Three Rivers
AAHAM Winter Meeting*

Join us for our Annual Winter Meeting and
Silent Auction! Agenda coming soon!

DECEMBER 10TH, 2024

Westinghouse Building
2000 Westinghouse Drive
Auditorium 105A
Cranberry Twp, PA 16066

Patient Accounting Week & ANI



Mark your calendars for National Patient Account Management (PAM) week is October 13 through October 19. It's a time to recognize and celebrate the hard work of those who manage patient accounts and ensure the financial well-being of healthcare institutions.



AAHAM's 2024 Annual National Institute (ANI) will take place November 12–14 at the Worthington Renaissance in Fort Worth, Texas. AAHAM is the premier organization for Revenue Cycle professionals. The ANI event spans three days and offers a variety of educational opportunities. The agenda includes concurrent sessions that allows you to learn more about the areas we are working within. Additionally, the different tracks allow you to learn about other areas of revenue cycle that you may not be as familiar with. The speakers are providers and vendors from all over the United States who are Subject Matter Experts in their respective fields. The ANI tracks include: Leadership/Strategy, Revenue Cycle, Operations

There is also an inspirational Keynote speaker, an interactive forum to discuss challenges and best practices, a panel discussion, as well as, the closing general session. The sessions are specifically designed to support our continuing education. Additionally, there are roundtables where best practices and challenges in the industry will be shared. The facilitators will then reconvene for a panel discussion.

The ANI helps you become an asset to your facility and colleagues while fostering essential industry connections. AAHAM provides you with practical solutions and innovative ideas that you can implement right away at your facility. In addition to the great networking opportunities, you can explore the latest products and services in our industry by visiting with the vendors. Won't you consider joining us at this year's conference?

Improving the Financial Health of Healthcare Providers

MEDICAL BILLING • REVENUE CYCLE MANAGEMENT • DEBT COLLECTION



Our sister companies, KeyMed Partners and Bureau of Account Management work hand in hand to help healthcare facilities and medical practices achieve maximum revenue and improve their financial health. We have extensive experience in all areas of healthcare billing, revenue cycle management and debt collection across a broad range of over 20 specialties.

SERVICES DEVELOPED & SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR:

- Hospitals
- Physician Groups
- Ambulatory Surgery Centers
- Long Term Acute Care
- Rehab/Skilled Nursing

MEDICAL BILLING SERVICES

- ✓ All-inclusive medical billing
- ✓ Coding and chart review
- ✓ Extensive insurance follow-up and denials management
- ✓ Accounts receivable reporting
- ✓ Practice management consulting

REVENUE CYCLE MANAGEMENT

- ✓ Insurance follow-up
- ✓ Patient inquiry and customer service
- ✓ Workers' compensation and auto insurance billing and follow-up
- ✓ Credit balance analysis/resolution
- ✓ Early out services
- ✓ Insurance verification and pre-authorization
- ✓ Credentialing and contract review

Bureau of Account Management is a nationally licensed, full service collection agency with extensive experience collecting debt for Healthcare Providers.

DEBT COLLECTION SERVICES

- ✓ Primary and secondary collections
- ✓ Estate verification programs
- ✓ Extended business office solutions
- ✓ Patient statement and pre-collection services
- ✓ Insurance follow-up
- ✓ Payment plan monitoring



Learn more about how KeyMed Partners and Bureau of Account Management can improve your financial health.

Scholarship Update

Christine Ifft, Scholarship Chair

We still have a pretty healthy scholarship fund! Please spread the word that this is available to our provider members who are in good standing and have been members for at least a year. It is available for the applicant (if qualified and approved) to use to attend an AAHAM- sponsored event if their employer does not cover the expenses.

We raise funds for this great provider member benefit through our 50/50 raffles and our Scholarship sponsorship level!

Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions regarding the scholarship fund! You can find information on our website at [Scholarship Program](#). You can also reach out to Christine Ifft, Scholarship Chair at atciff@phx-pt.com.

Education Update

Sharon Taube, Education Chair

2024 Fall Conference ~ A Success!

Sharon Taube, Education Chair

It's not easy to get away from work for two-three days anymore so we decided to do something different for this year's fall conference. We held the event in Pittsburgh at the Rivers Casino, September 5-6, 2024. The theme for the event was "Key Pathways through the Revenue Cycle Journey."

We kicked off the conference Thursday evening with a networking welcome reception from 6:30-8:30 in the new Bridges Ballroom. The vendor partners had their tables set up and we enjoyed an amazing view, great food, drinks and time getting to know each other before the next day's educational meeting. Attendees had a fun time playing "Mind the Gap", a multi-generational trivia game that gave us LOTS of laughs. Never knew we have members who can sing & love trivia!

To start the day on Friday, Alyshia Ravida, Chapter President and Christine Ifft, Chair of the Board & Sponsorship Chair, shared welcome announcements and recognized our vendor partners. We also reviewed and voted on Chapter Bylaw changes that Brenda Fraas & Chuck Hilton so nicely worked on and updated. Christine then explained our vendor partner puzzle contest, which was new this year. All provider attendees were to meet with all the vendor partners and ask them 3 questions. Once the providers found out the answers, they received a puzzle piece from each of the vendors. Once all of the puzzle pieces were obtained, the provider attendees put them together to form our Pennsylvania Three Rivers logo! They were then entered into the drawing to win items at the end of the day.

The first speaker of the day was Eric Wixom, co-founder & CEO of Wixcorp, who came all the way from Utah! His presentation on "Creating a Patient Financial Experience in a Digital Age" was a perfect way to start the day. Key takeaways from Eric's presentation were:

- **Patient Engagement** is the new competitive landscape
- **Don't wait** for a big project to improve the patient experience—even small changes can have big impacts.
- Consumers are looking for **digital self-service solutions**
- The **patient's financial experience** encompasses everything, not just their post-care billing.
- **Patient-driven healthcare** increases your ability to attract and retain patients.
- Always look at your processes and technology from the patient's perspective.

Education Update

Sharon Taube, Education Chair

Georgina Trunzo, Revenue Cycle Director for the Central Access Support team for UPMC was next with an excellent presentation on UPMC's Patient Access Journey of Transformation which started back in 2017 with reason for change. UPMC had many lessons learned and their journey continues. Attendees had many take aways! Thank you Georgina!

We brought back Dan Mulholland from Harty Springer and he spoke about "How Recent Supreme Court Decisions will Affect Medicare Rules". Some things we should do are:

- Keep track of status of new rules (more likely to be challenged)
- Be on the lookout for lawsuits and injunctions relating to existing rules
- Take advantage of Loper Bright in any response to recoupment demands
- More closely coordinate with Compliance and Legal

We took a break to visit our vendor partners and to have a delicious lunch. We cannot thank the staff at the Rivers Casino for the EXCELLENT customer service and the amazing food for our event. They both were top notch and made the day so much easier for all. To start the second half of the day, Mr.Wixom graciously agreed to present on "KPI-Metrics: Pros/Cons of Data Tracking in Healthcare and How to Apply Context & Make Them Actionable". Eric has a wealth of useful knowledge of our industry and we hope to have him back again. Oh, and he's pretty good at trivia too!

Education Update

Sharon Taube, Education Chair

Chad Wallace from HRSI gave us an informative update on Medicaid Unwinding as well as State & Federal Updates. Thank you, Chad, as Three Rivers always appreciates hearing from you.

After the last break spent visiting with our vendor partners and collecting puzzle pieces, we had had our last session of the day which could have gone on for hours. Panelist Marianna Balzer (RTNA), Laura Moss (Chan Soon-Shiong MC at Winber), Julie Rusch (AHN) and Moderator Chris Milligan from Revenue Group discussed Managing Revenue Cycle Changes & Challenges. The session was full of awesome questions from the group with great answers and ideas. It was a perfect way to end the educational part of the day.

We wrapped up the day with the raffle drawings that vendor partners and members so nicely donated. Every provider walked away with a prize!

A big shout out to all the members of the PAThree Rivers AAHAM Education Committee for successfully changing up the fall conference from previous years and providing amazing education that our members can walk away from knowing that a day away from work was well worth it. Thank you again to all our corporate sponsors for supporting our chapter, we could not do what we do without you!

Certification Updates

Brenda Fraas, Certification Chair

Anyone who certifies or recertifies after 8/1/24 will not receive a printed certificate from National. They announced effective August 1, 2024, we now have the flexibility to print our certificates at our convenience. They have made it easier for us to download and print them anytime through BadgeCert. We also have the option to download and save a digital copy to present to our employer.

Information regarding Exam Prep

For those candidates taking the exam, the industry informs the exam, but the exam does not inform the study materials. This is to say that just because something is on the study guide does not mean it will be on the exam and just because it is on the exam, it is not necessarily in the study guide.

AAHAM Certification Exam Schedule

AAHAM offers certification exams monthly to offer flexible scheduling options to become certified when the time is right for you and your busy schedule.

CRCS and CCT certification exams can now be scheduled on demand throughout the year. CRCE, CRCP, and CRIP certification exams are offered on the third week of each month.

All certification registrations must be made online through the AAHAM website. Keep in mind, exam registrations need to be submitted at least 30 days before the scheduled exam date.

Exam Development

Our Chair of the Board, Christine Ifft, and the certification committees have been hard at work updating all five of the exams, refreshing the exam items, removing questions that are no longer relevant to the revenue cycle, and ensuring that the language used is current. It's a lot of work, but necessary so all exams are current.

Important Certification Exam Updates for CRCS, CRCP and CRIP Exams

There is an important change to the way our certification exams are graded. As part of National's ongoing efforts to improve the certification process, we will be moving to a new grading model for the CRCS, CRCP, and CRIP certification exams.

Certification Updates

Brenda Fraas, Certification Chair

What's Changing?

Previously, our certification exams were graded by section, and if a test taker failed a section, they were required to retake that specific section. **Moving forward, all exams will be graded as a whole!** If you complete the exam and obtain a passing score, the individual section scores will not be taken into account. This means you will no longer need to retake specific sections of the exam if you achieve an overall passing score. However, if you do not pass the exam, you will need to retake the exam in its entirety.

Why the Change?

This update is designed to streamline the certification process and reduce the burden on test-takers. By focusing on the overall score, National aims to provide a more balanced assessment of your knowledge and skills. The intention is to remove barriers to certification, which should help you to accomplish the goal.

Effective Date:

This change will take effect on September 1, 2024. All CRCP, CRCS, and CRIP exams taken on or after this date will be subject to the new grading model. All exams taken prior to this transition will honor the section retake model and test-takers will have one year from the date of their original test to retake the failed section.

For important reminders and other key information, please don't miss AAHAM's monthly newsletter (<https://tinyurl.com/bdcw3nvm>).

Government Relations

Ken Krieger, Government Relations Chair

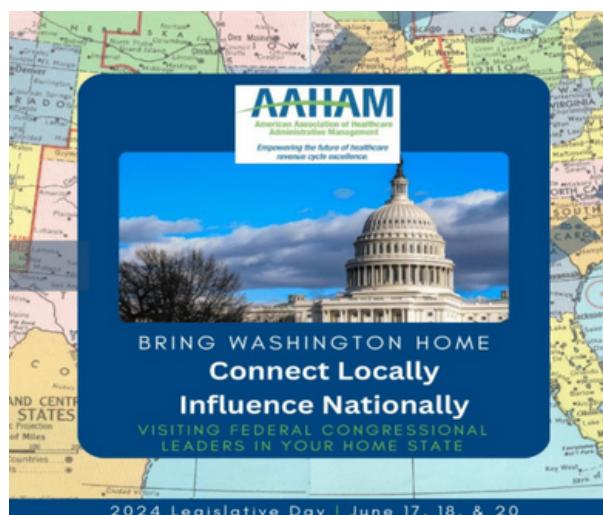
AAHAM hosted its 19th Annual Legislative Day “at home”. Over 3 days in late June, Alyshia Ravida, Christine Ifft and I were able to connect locally and influence nationally with Federal congressional leaders in the state of Pennsylvania via pre-scheduled in-person visits and virtual calls. Close to 100 members across the country did the same in their respective states/districts.

This years’ topics were

- Prior Authorization and how it poses obstacles to patient-centered care
- AI Usage by Payers in Denial Processing and how the use of this tactic lacks transparency, accountability and human oversight
- Medical Debt Collection and proposed delays in the ability to credit report

Position Papers on all topics were devised and distributed and overviews were presented and made available to all registered attendee’s to prepare for the actual meetings. Christine and Alyshia were able to attend a virtual meeting with Senator Casey’s office along with members from other PA Chapters. We all got to attend and introduce ourselves at a heavily attended call with Senator Fetterman’s office (who we all agree had an Aide who was very knowledgeable, understanding and personable. We anticipate follow up and deeper engagement over time with that office.) I had the opportunity to visit Representative DeLuzio’s office in Carnegie and was afforded 30 minutes of time to deliver our message and leave behind the position papers. The Aide I met with did not have a healthcare background, but did agree to get our position papers to the right person.

It was a different way of doing business this year but in my eyes, it was still effective. AAHAM has gained so much traction over the years with our Legislative Days. Cheers to our National Government Relation steam for finding a way to maintain momentum and remain relevant. Back to DC in 2025! Join us



Government Relations

Ken Krieger, Government Relations Chair

IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT RELATIONS ARTICLES:

Medical Bills Catch Almost Half of Insured US Adults by Surprise

Forty-five percent of US adults say they've been billed in the past year for medical care that they thought was covered by their insurance, leaving many footing the bill for insurance-company errors.

Less than half of those who received surprise bills wound up challenging them, according to a report Thursday from the Commonwealth Fund, an independent health research foundation. Many who didn't challenge say that's because they weren't aware it was an option or feared it wasn't worth their time.

While US workers and their employers together pay about \$24,000 a year for family health insurance premiums, the diversity of plans and options leaves many people confused about what exactly is covered and what they have to pay out of pocket.

"It is stressful enough dealing with a complex health care issue," said Sara Collins, vice president for health care coverage and access at the Commonwealth Fund and one of the study's authors, in an interview. "And then to have a financial complexity inserted into that really exacerbates what's already a difficult situation for families."

Collins noted that among people who challenged their bills, 38% said the money they owed was ultimately reduced or eliminated. When people challenged insurers' decisions to deny medical care, the successful appeal rate was around 50%.

Those findings suggest that people are being billed erroneously or denied care they should be getting, Collins said.

The report was based on a survey of a nationally representative sample of 7,873 adults. The Commonwealth Fund focused its analysis on 4,803 working-age individuals who were insured for the past year.

Government Relations

Ken Krieger, Government Relations Chair

Key GOP Lawmaker Asks Agencies to Drop Mental Health Parity Rule

House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairwoman Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) is urging the Biden administration to abandon a rule aimed at improving mental health coverage in commercial insurance plans.

Foxx on Thursday sent a letter to the heads of the Health and Human Services, Labor and Treasury departments, saying the rule's language would instead limit access to mental health treatment by discouraging employers from offering coverage.

The departments didn't respond to a request for comment.

The agencies were tentatively aiming to finalize the proposal in July of this year, according to the regulatory agenda. The proposed rule features language to create parity between physical and mental health care in "non-quantitative treatment limitations," like prior authorization, that insurers use to review and approve services. The departments previously found widespread deficiencies in mental health parity requirements among health plans, but the industry has argued the rule's treatment standards are unworkable.

Foxx blamed the industry's shortcomings on the administration's "failure to provide employers and plan sponsors with clear direction" like guidance outlining specific examples of proper compliance. The rule also fails to take into account other factors, like the shortage of mental health professionals, she argued.

"Despite this lack of clarity, the Biden-Harris administration threatens to shame employers and plan sponsors publicly if they are not in compliance with the administration's unclear requirements," she wrote.

Foxx also questioned whether the departments were exceeding their authority in light of the US Supreme Court's decision in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, which overturned the long standing legal doctrine known as *Chevron* that deferred to agencies in interpreting unclear laws.

"Under *Loper Bright*, the Tri-Agencies do not have the authority to create new tests for NQTLs that Congress did not intend," she said

Membership Musing

Nancy Baker

Thank you to all for renewing your membership this year! We hope you are enjoying some of the many benefits that are available. Since our last newsletter we have had five 2024 membership renewals. We also have two new members: Toni Blue (Charles J. Hilton & Associates, P.C.) and Joseph DeSimone (PMH Alliance). Welcome Toni and Joseph!

One of the many benefits of an AAHAM membership is the opportunity to also join one of 28 local AAHAM chapters. A local chapter keeps you up to date on the most recent developments in your area and provides you with opportunities to network with others who can share insight on common problems. A National Membership Directory is available online to connect you with other local and national members and vendors. National also has a Job Bank that can assist you in searching and posting your next job opportunity. Unlimited networking and information exchange is also another added benefit at both the National and Local level. You also have access to state hospital associations nationwide, as well as, AAHAM Members Only Social Network.

If you have joined our Chapter through National but have not yet been updated with our Chapter, please notify us and we will investigate and update your membership record, if applicable! (Sorry, but there is a slight delay in relaying records from National to the local chapters.)

Our Membership Drive for 2025 will be starting soon. Stay tuned for more information!

Looking forward to seeing all of you at our next meeting!



Little Known Commonwealth Court Case is a Jewel for Provider

Charles J. Hilton

I'm sure many Providers have experienced a patient stating his/her upcoming service is a work-related injury and that his/her workers' compensation insurance company is responsible to pay the bill. Often, these patients have health insurance as well.

As Providers are aware, there are numerous occasions when the workers' compensation carrier receives the bill from the Provider and issues, a causation denial, i.e. the services are not related to a compensable work injury. At that point, the Provider typically bills the health insurance carrier, with a copy of the denial from the workers' compensation carrier, and typically, the Provider should receive payment from the patient's health insurer.

Once payment is received from the health insurer, the Provider should conduct a follow-up inquiry with the patient to determine the status of the workers' compensation claim. When a claim is in litigation, i.e., the patient is fighting the workers' compensation denial, the Provider should perform some follow-up phone calls to determine the status of the previously denied workers' compensation claim.

Here is why. If the patient is successful in his/her workers' compensation litigation, the Provider, in many cases, is entitled to an additional payment amount from the workers' compensation carrier, **above and beyond the health insurance carrier's payment.**

To the extent the patient's claim becomes compensable pursuant to the Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Act, either by decision of the Workers' Compensation Judge and/or by Supplemental Agreement/Stipulation, based on the rationale set forth in **Westinghouse Electric Corp vs. Worker's Compensation Appeal Board (Weaver), 823 A.2d 209 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2003)**, the workers' compensation carrier is required to pay the Provider the difference between the Act 44 workers' compensation fee schedule amount and the payment made by the health insurer. Exceptions are when governmental health payers such as Medical Assistance and Medicare have previously paid the Provider, no additional payment is allowed from the workers' compensation carrier

Little Known Commonwealth Court Case is a Jewel for Provider

Charles J. Hilton

For example, if the workers' compensation carrier is found liable and the workers' compensation Act 44 Fee Schedule is \$2,000.00 for the Provider's services, and the Provider was previously paid \$1,000.00 by the health plan, the Provider is entitled to retain the previous \$1,000.00 from the health insurance carrier and obtain an additional payment of \$1,000.00 plus statutory interest at the rate of 10% per annum from the workers' compensation carrier.

In summary, if the Provider was paid by a commercial health plan whose reimbursement rate was less than the Act 44 workers' comp reimbursement rate, and subsequent thereto, the workers' compensation insurer is found liable, then the Provider can reach out to the workers' compensation carrier and request the additional amount due. It is worth some additional follow-up because often-times the additional amount is significant.

If a Provider has any questions regarding this issue, please feel free to contact Attorney Charles J. Hilton at (412) 435-0162

Charles J. Hilton & Associates, P.C.

Attorneys at Law

Oakmont Station Two, Suite 203527 Cedar Way

Oakmont, PA 15139

chilton@cjhiltonlaw.com

The Revenue Cycle Law Firm

Treasurer's Report

Erica Methven, Treasurer

Account Balances - As of 9/17/2024

Account	9/17/2024 Balance
Bank Accounts	
Non-Profit Checking xxxxxx1315	11,874.65
Scholarship	4,869.94
TOTAL Bank Accounts	16,744.59
OVERALL TOTAL	16,744.59