

REFLECTIONS

Pennsylvania Three Rivers AAHAM

Winter Newsletter

MARCH 2024



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President's Letter

Alyshia Ravida

Greetings to all our PA Three Rivers AAHAM Members and Friends!

I'd like to start by expressing my gratitude to all of you for voting for me as your 2024-2025 Chapter President. It is an absolute honor that you would trust me to lead the Chapter in this role. I couldn't do it without all the amazing other volunteers that generously give their time to serve on the board as well. A big thank you to all our board members for their hard work and commitment to the chapter!

Since elected as President, I also now sit on the National Board of Directors at AAHAM representing our chapter. In January, I attended the annual President's Meeting in Fort Worth, Texas. This is where the Annual National Institute (ANI) will be held this coming November. Christine Ifft, the previous Past President, also joined me for this trip as she is serving as the National Executive Certification Chair. We were able to have a little bit of time to enjoy the area and watched the cattle drive at the Fort Worth Stockyards which was very cool.

The President's Meeting went extremely well, as we worked very closely with the new management company, Association Headquarters. This meeting was a milestone for our organization, as not only did we revise our Vision, Mission, and Priorities, but we started building our organizations' 3-year plan. As we continue to meet and develop the national goals for the next 3 years, I will share that information with you.

Our new vision:

AAHAM: Empowering the future of healthcare revenue cycle excellence

Our new mission:

AAHAM is the leading resource for the healthcare revenue cycle community, dedicated to providing unparalleled education, certification, advocacy, and career development.

Our 2024-2026 Priorities:

Priority One: Reimagine and Refresh the AAHAM Brand

Priority Two: Increase and Invest in AAHAM marketing and communication efforts

Priority Three: Elevate strategic functionality of AAHAM Board and Chapters

Priority Four: Grow Membership – Increase Acquisition and Retention Efforts

Priority Five: Elevate Certification and Education Benefits

Priority Six: Grow Revenue and Profitability

Priority Seven: Increased Advocacy Efforts

We truly believe that our newly revised Vision, Mission, and Priorities will help drive our organizations success in the future!

I hope to see you all at our Annual Spring Institute and Payer Updates event on Thursday, April 11, 2024. The Chapter Vice President, Education Chair, and Education Committee have been working hard to offer this educational event.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank our 2023 Chapter Sponsors for helping us have a successful year – as well as our 2024 Chapter Sponsors! We appreciate your investment in our membership and are honoured to have your support.

Kindest Regards,

Alyshia Ravida
Pennsylvania Three Rivers Chapter President

We would like to take the time to recognize our wonderful sponsors! Without them, we would not be able to offer any of our great programming and networking opportunities throughout the year!

DIAMOND SPONSORS

Charles J. Hilton & Associates, P.C.

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Audley Law Offices, P.C.

Credit Management Company

Penn Credit Corporation

GOLD SPONSORS

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KeyBridge Medical Revenue Care

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SILVER SPONSORS

HRSI Healthcare Receivable Specialist, Inc.

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BRONZE SPONSORS

BAM – Bureau of Account Management

Commercial Acceptance Company

DeBiase & Levine, Inc.

KeyMed Partners

SCHOLARSHIP SPONSORS

Sunstone Consulting

Christine Ifft

Chair of the Board, Sponsorship and Scholarship Chair

Christine's current position is Chair of the Board, Sponsorship Chair and Scholarship Chair. As Chair of the Board, Christine serves as a leader, mentor and mediator for other members of the Board of Directors. Christine also oversees the Nominating/Election of Officers during an election year. She makes sure that our meetings run smoothly. As Sponsorship Chair, Christine is responsible for recruiting sponsors to provide financial support to our chapter. As Scholarship Chair, She tries to promote that we have funds available to distribute to any provider that would like to attend our meetings and their company does not reimburse or pay for them. Christine also helps to raise funds for the account so that we can continue to give out scholarships.



A little about me – I have 5 children and 10 grandchildren. I can't think of a better job than that of a Gigi! It's my most favorite "job" that I have ever had! I love to travel and I actually really enjoy my job! My mother is 78 years old and works fulltime - four ten hour days a week. When I said that I love my job, I truly do, but not enough to stay working that long! My "retirement job" will be working with dogs in some sort of fashion – either at a shelter or a doggie daycare center – for that matter, I may just open one myself! 😊

Alyshia Ravidia

President

Alyshia has been involved in AAHAM since about 2015. Alyshia fell in love with AAHAM when she started out as the Communication Chair for PA Three Rivers. Alyshia took a little break raising kids and then joined the board again in 2022 as Vice President. Alyshia is currently the President of the chapter, but she is still learning about the organization. As President, she is more involved in the national organization than ever before. She lives in Butler, PA with my husband and 2 boys.



Fun fact, I love to fish – mostly with my husband, but he can't take the credit because I have been fishing since I was a little girl.

Sara Carroll

Vice President

Sara was first introduced to AAHAM by Sharon Taube in 2018. Sharon introduced Sara to others in the PA Three Rivers AAHAM Chapter and ironically Sara ended up moving west to Pittsburgh to work for Allegheny Health Network. Sara officially joined the PA Three Rivers Chapter in Spring of 2023 when she joined BDO to do healthcare consulting. Sara is now the Vice President of the Chapter helping to support our President and oversees the Education Committee.



An interesting fact about me is that I am a three time Division I National Champion in field hockey, having played at the University of North Carolina.

Erica Methven

Treasurer

Erica has worked in Revenue Cycle for 17 years. She is currently the Revenue Cycle Manager at Phoenix Rehab. Erica attended the PA Three River AAHAM Fall conference in 2022 and decided to get involved. The Treasurer position was vacated after the then Treasurer left healthcare and Erica decided to fill the role. Erica has enjoyed meeting new people and the education is fantastic.



MEET THE BOARD

Mary Carol Limegrover Secretary

Mary Carol has been affiliated with PA Three Rivers AAHAM for 6 years. As she wanted to get more involved with the Chapter, she is now our secretary. As a Chapter Secretary, her primary responsibilities are to attend and document the Board of Directors meetings and distribute the meeting minutes to the Board members. She is also responsible for general meeting setups.



A Fun Fact: Mary Carol lives in the same zip code she grew up in.

Aly Ferris Newsletter Chair

Aly joined Three River Chapter in 2022, after attending the Fall Conference. She was interested to see what more AAHAM has to offer. She started off as the Legislative Chair but is currently the Newsletter Chair and a committee member of the Communications Committee. Each year she is learning more and more and is hoping to be certified by the end of 2024. Aly just got married to her husband last year in October and lives in Verona, PA with her husband and two children.



Fun Fact about Aly is that she is a huge hockey fan, loves watching her husband play Dek Hockey and watching her son learn the sport.

Brenda Fraas Certification Chair

Brenda was introduced to AAHAM when her former Director encouraged his management team to get involved in a local healthcare organization. She chose Three Rivers AAHAM and started attending meetings. In 2008, President Lisa Hennigan asked Brenda to get involved and to be a part of the Board of Directors as Certification Chair. She was not certified at that time, but promised to 'get certified' within a year, which she did. At that time, the certification title was CPAM, which is equivalent to our CRCE. Brenda moved on to be Vice President under Barb Winwood for four years, President for 4 years then onto Chair of the Board for 4 years while Christine Ifft served as President. While serving as Chair of PA Three Rivers AAHAM, she was also Chair of the Chapter Development Committee for National AAHAM. Once again, Brenda is the Certification Chair to help boost the number of members certified for our Chapter. "WON'T YOU LET ME HELP YOU GET CERTIFIED?"

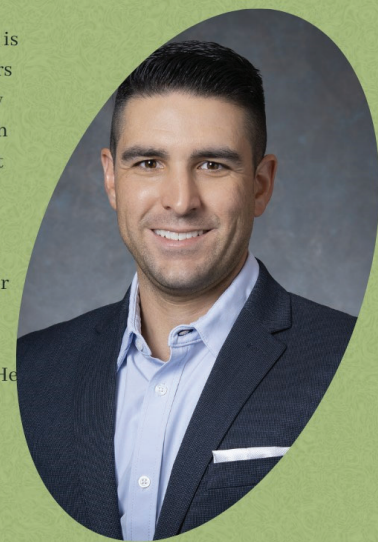


Fun Fact: Brenda's bucket list includes visiting as many of the U.S National Park as she can.

Daniel Forbes Membership Chair

Daniel has recently joined the PA Three Rivers Chapter as Membership Chair. He is excited to collaborate with other members of this Chapter to navigate the constantly evolving world of the Revenue Cycle, both in Western Pennsylvania and throughout the country.

He is excited to learn and grow alongside the community. As the Membership Chair for this chapter, Daniel's aim to promote and support current and prospective members in their professional pursuits. He strives to foster a diverse and dynamic organization that caters to the unique needs of all our members.



Fun fact about me: I've been to every major league baseball stadium! Yep, from Fenway Park to Dodger Stadium, I've seen them all. It was a wild ride, and I have many incredible memories from my travels.

MEET THE BOARD

Ken Krieger Government Relations Chair

Ken has been an AAHAM member since 1997 it was called AGPAM. Government Relations is a turnkey position for him as he stays abreast of what National is doing and ensures that we do what we need to do at the local level to support them. Attending Legislative Day and being comfortable in ensuring that our positions and our messages are clear when in front of Senator and Representative's (or usually their Staffers) is probably the most important and fulfilling part of this Chair position.



Lisa Hennigan Finance Committee Chair

Lisa joined Three Rivers AAHAM in 2000, after attending a fall conference and learning the value of meeting other Health Care professionals and networking. Over the years, Lisa has been in various positions with both the PA Three Rivers Chapter and at National AAHAM. She served as Vice President/President/Chair of the Board for the PA Three Rivers Chapter before becoming Education Chair for National AAHAM. Her current role for the PA Three Rivers Chapter is Finance Chair and Chapter Excellence Chair. Lisa enjoys swimming, working in my yard/garden and watching the birds in my yard.



Matthew Keeney Communication Chair

Matthew has been affiliate with PA Three Rivers AAHAM for 5 years now and has been a part of the Board Of Directors for 4 years in the Communications Chair. His role entails sending emails, updating the website and general communications for the Chapter. He was also overseeing Social Media until we started expanding and now is partnered with ALyssa to get PA Three Rivers AAHAM's name out into the world.



Interesting fact about me: I am one of the first people to have a degree in Health Sciences from Ohio State.

Sharon Taube Education Chair

Sharon has been the Manager of Business Development for KeyMed Partners and Bureau of Account Management (BAM) in Camp Hill, PA for over 17 years. Sharon has been a member of National AAHAM for just as long and has been directly involved with the PA Three Rivers AAHAM committees for 5 years. She is currently the Education Chair for PA Three Rivers, and her goal is to provide dynamic education events to its members so they have the tools to be even more successful in their organizations. She has also serves as Central PA HFMA Chapter President, Vice President, Treasurer, Membership & Education Chair from 2012-2020.



Fun Facts: Sharon has been married for over 25 years and has two girls who will both be in college fall of 2024. Empty Nesters!!! She and her family love spending time outside and cheering on their favorite Pittsburgh teams!!

Upcoming AAHAM Events ~~ Mark your calendars!

[Seismic Trends Under the Surface – What Can We Do Now? National Webinar](#)

3/13/2024 @ 1:30 PM

[March 2024 Certification Exam Dates](#)

Thursday, April 11, 2024



[2024 PA Three Rivers AAHAM Spring Institute and Payer Meeting](#)

Pittsburgh Marriott North, 100 Cranberry Woods Drive, Cranberry Twp, PA 16066

[April 2024 Certification Exam Dates](#)

Monday, April 22, 2024 - Friday, April 26, 2024

[May 2024 Certification Exam Dates](#)

Monday, May 20, 2024 - Friday, May 24, 2024

[AAHAM 2024 Legislative Day](#)

Monday, June 17, 2024 - Thursday, June 20, 2024

[June 2024 Certification Exam Dates](#)

Monday, June 17, 2024 - Friday, June 21, 2024

[July 2024 Certification Exam Dates](#)

Monday, July 15, 2024 - Friday, July 19, 2024

[August 2024 Certification Exam Dates](#)

Monday, Aug. 19, 2024 - Friday, Aug. 23, 2024

[PA Three Rivers AAHAM Networking Event, Rivers Casino, Pittsburgh](#)

Thursday, September 5, 2024 (evening)



[PA Three Rivers AAHAM Fall Symposium, Rivers Casino, Pittsburgh](#)

Friday, September 6, 2024

[September 2024 Certification Exam Dates](#)

Monday, Sept. 16, 2024 - Friday, Sept. 20, 2024

[National Patient Account Management \(PAM\) week](#)

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 - Saturday, Oct. 19, 2024

[October 2024 Certification Exam Dates](#)

Monday, Oct. 21, 2024 - Friday, Oct. 25, 2024

[ANI @ Worthington Renaissance in Fort Worth, Texas](#)

Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2024 - Thursday, Nov. 14, 2024

[November 2024 Certification Exam Dates](#)

Monday, Nov. 18, 2024 - Friday, Nov. 22, 2024

[PA Three Rivers AAHAM Holiday Meeting - more info to come](#)

Friday, December 13, 2024

[December 2024 Certification Exam Dates](#)

Monday, Dec. 6, 2024 - Friday, Dec. 20, 2024

DECEMBER MEETING OVERVIEW

MATTHEW KEENEY

December 8th was a day of Holiday cheer for Pennsylvania Three Rivers AAHAM as the chapter held its first in-person December Meeting since 2019 at the Pittsburgh Marriot North in Cranberry.

As with previous December Meetings, a silent auction was held throughout the day. Items to bid on included wine and spirit bundles, handmade cross-stitch pictures, a Taylor Swift CD/Vinyl Album combo, decorative candy boxes, Penguins tickets and Amazon gift cards to name just a few of the items that were auctioned off. Proceeds from the auction benefited the Chapter's scholarship fund. Winners were announced at the end of the meeting.

Another part of the December Meeting is our charitable donations to a selected charity. This year the charity of choice was Beverly's Birthdays, which provides birthday presents and parties to children in the area who are experiencing homelessness or are in financial need. Items donated included children's toys, books, board games, clothing, monetary donations and hygiene items. Donations were delivered to Beverly's Birthdays headquarters a few days after the meeting.

The day began with registration and breakfast, followed by Christine Ifft's final Welcome and Chapter updates as Chapter President. After introducing this year's Board of Directors, Christine introduced the group to Beverly's Birthdays, as we watched a short video that explained their mission and their operations in action. Finally, Christine outlined the topsy-turvy four years of her Presidency, which included the COVID pandemic, and thanked the chapter membership, Sponsors and Board of Directors for all their hard work through this trying time for her. She said it was not farewell or goodbye, but a transition to a new role as Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Chapter.

Our first speaker of the day was Matthew Belgie from UPMC Corporate. His presentation was entitled Generations Working Together, which highlighted each of the generations found in today's workforce (Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z) and explained how they approach work. As an illustration, attendees were asked to take part in an activity where groups were asked to write down the defining events, people and/or products that defined each generation and then discussed how that plays into their attitudes and preferences. Finally, Matt focused on strategies for how best to get each generation to work on your team.

The next speaker was Bill Bollinger from Americollect. His presentation, Hospital Shaming and What We Can Do, focused on the trends of health systems being "shamed" in the media or online for using any and all collection efforts to recover payments for services. Bill provided examples of how health systems have been harmed by these trends and described recent and pending legislation that has made it harder for health systems. Finally, Bill used real life examples of how to change the narrative on the collection process and provided strategies to help overcome this growing problem.

Following Bill's presentation the meeting attendees participated in a 45-minute Open Forum focused on best practices in Revenue Cycle Management. This concluded with lunch.

Following lunch, Rich Nagy from Allegheny Health Network spoke. His presentation, Understanding Third Party Contracting, provided an overview of Third Party contracting structures and their pitfalls. In addition, Rich answered questions and gave examples of strategies he has utilized to maximize payments.

Our final speaker of the day was Kathryn Beard from R1 RCM. Her presentation was entitled The Changing No Surprises Act: Where it Stands and What Comes Next. Kathryn provided an expert overview of the NSA. She also guided participants through the ongoing changing regulations, lawsuits, technology gaps and questions about enforcement with the Act.

Following the final presentation, the 2024-2025 Chapter Officers were sworn into office by Chapter Legal Counsel Chuck Hilton, the Silent Auction winners were announced, and the meeting was wrapped-up.

DECEMBER MEETING OVERVIEW

CONGRATS TO ALL OF THE SILENT AUCTION WINNERS FROM THE DECEMBER, 2023 MEETING!

- Amazon gift card donated by Penn Credit was won by Susan McDonald
- 12+ Jolly Days of Christmas donated by Brenda Fraas was won by Rich Nagy
- Amazon gift card donated by Commercial Acceptance Company was won by Sharon Taube
- vPittsburgh Pens tickets donated by Credit Management Company was won by Mary Carol Limegrover
- Gnome decoration & gift card donated HRSI was won by Susan McDonald
- Holiday cross stitch donated by Taren Lee was won by Laura Moss
- Bose Bluetooth Speaker donated by Revco Solution and won by Lisa Hennigan
- Cup of Cheer donated by KeyBridge and won by Toney Fedullo
- Gingerbread decoration donated by Brenda Fraas and won by Jackie Shaw
- Kate Spade purse & wallet donated by KeyMed/BAM and won by Nancy Baker
- 12+ Bubbly Days of Christmas donated by Brenda Fraas and won by Dale Brumbach
- Lighthouse cross stitch donated by Taran Lee and won by Brenda Fraas
- Handmade Christmas quilt donated by Brenda Fraas and won by Jackie Shaw
- Gift from Lancaster donated by Laurie Steffy and won by Erica Methven
- Aperol Spritz donated by Audley Law and won by Rich Nagy
- Let's Eat gift card donated by Erica Methven and won by Tania McFadden
- Christmas Joy donated by Christine Ifft and won by Erica Methven
- Basket of Joy donated by Laura Moss and won by Sara Carroll
- Pamper Me donated by Lisa Hennigan and won by Sara Carroll
- Taylor Swift Music Collection donated by D&L and won by Aly Ferris
- Wine Tray donated by Hilton Law Office and won by Nancy Baker

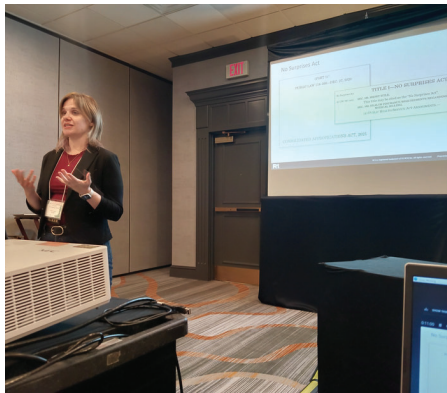
& SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL WHO DONATED AND SUPPORTED OUR 2023 SILENT AUCTION!!!



DECEMBER MEETING OVERVIEW

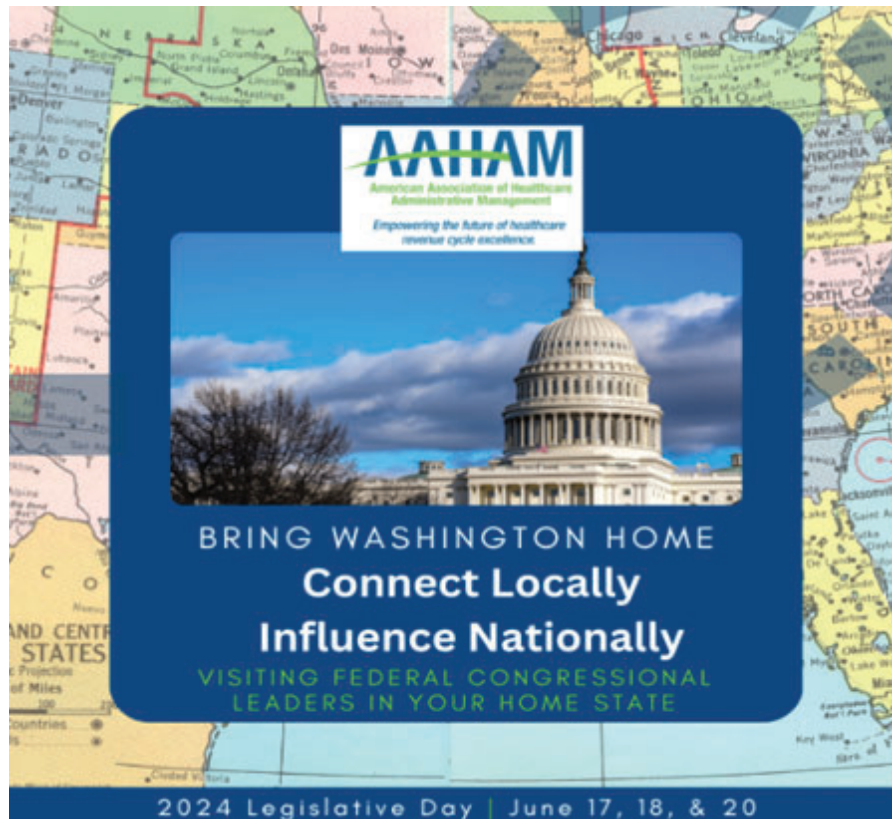


DECEMBER MEETING OVERVIEW



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

Ken Krieger



In mid-February, the National Government Relations committee provided an update regarding AAHAM Legislative Day 2024. More details are in store over the next 4-6 weeks, but here are some highlights as of the date of this newsletter:

- Since it is a presidential election year and Capitol Hill will be even more chaotic and pricier than usual, “Leg Day” will take place both virtually AND in-person.
 - The in-person will be at the STATE level, meaning we will meet with our Senators and Representatives locally in their home offices – which is about as grass roots as it gets.
- Virtual prep meetings and Speaker sessions will take place early the week of June 16, with the actual face-to-face meetings being set for later in the week on Thursday and Friday.

Position Papers are still to be determined, but will surely be appropriate and powerful. Topics in the past included 340B, Price Transparency, Telehealth, No Surprise Act, Expansion of Access to Mental Health Services and many more over the past 19 years

Look for more posts and/or visit our local or National websites regularly to get involved. We will need as many boots on the ground as possible in our respective geographies across the state toward making our voices heard. WE CAN help effect real change!

CERTIFICATION CORNER

Brenda Fraas

WHY EARN AN AAHAM CERTIFICATION?

AAHAM certification is an investment in your personal growth and your professional future. For over forty years, AAHAM's elite certification program has set the standard of excellence in patient financial services and the revenue cycle.

It doesn't matter whether you are new to the healthcare revenue cycle or are a seasoned veteran, our family of AAHAM certification examinations offer a complete career ladder beginning with the Certified Revenue Cycle Specialist and culminating with the Certified Revenue Cycle Executive. We have a certification that will help advance your career.

Plus the learning doesn't stop once you have obtained certification. Our certifications are maintained through a continuous education process. This assures you stay abreast of the important changes and updates that continually occur in our rapidly changing healthcare environment.

AAHAM OFFERS 5 CERTIFICATIONS. WHICH ONE IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Exam	Number of questions	How long does it take	Duration of certification	Cost of exam/retake	Test window or on-demand	Cost of study guide	Required CEUs for recertification
CRCE	180 total (45 per section)	8 hours	2 years	\$299/\$50	Testing window	\$399/ Practice exam is \$50	40
CRCP	240 total (60 per section)	4 hours	2 years	\$199/\$50	Testing window	\$299	30
CRIP	240 total (60 per section)	4 hours	2 years	\$199/\$50	Testing window	\$299	30
CRCS	120 total (40 per section)	2 hours	3 years	\$100/\$50	On-demand	\$99	30
CCT	80 total (1 section)	90 minutes	3 years	\$100/ no sections	On-demand	\$99	20

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for CRCS STUDY SESSIONS

The CRCS exam is the first step in the certification ladder. The exam is intended for revenue cycle staff with responsibilities in patient access, billing, account follow-up, denial management, collections, cash posting, customer service and self-pay collections.

Mark your calendars and plan on joining us every Thursday during March as PA Three Rivers AAHAM is offering study sessions to prepare staff involved in the management of patient accounts:

- March 7, 2024 Patient Access/Front Desk
- March 14, 2024 Billing
- March 21, 2024 Credit & Collection
- March 28, 2024 Overview / CRCS quiz

Depending on interest and feedback, we may continue the sessions to climb the certification ladder.

If you need additional information on certification, please contact Brenda Fraas @ fraasbl2@upmc.edu.

MEMBERSHIP

Christine Ifft

We have had a great year with local membership last year! We are proud to say that we currently had 130 local members with the Pennsylvania Three Rivers Chapter! Thank you so much for joining our Chapter and we hope that you are reaped some of the benefits of your membership!

In case you weren't aware of those benefits – one of the biggest benefits is that you get to enjoy reduced fees to any of our conferences that we have throughout the year! If you haven't made it to any this year, we have our next and final conference of the year coming up on December 8th. If you have attended, I think you can attest that we have had some great education and networking opportunities! We now offer a "combo" ticket to these events – where you can choose the membership/event ticket at the price of a membership and member pricing for the event. For instance, for our fall event, a non-member ticket was \$400, but a membership/member rate ticket was \$330 so you can see the savings!

Another benefit is that we have a scholarship fund made available to those members that have been with us for at least a year. You can apply for the scholarship to offset up to \$500 to attend an overnight conference being presented by Pennsylvania Three Rivers Chapter and/or National AAHAM that is at least two days in length and includes one overnight stay or up to the cost of registration for a one-day meeting. Our membership rate is only \$30 for the campaign year!

Please consider joining for 2024 if you haven't already. If you are already a member, THANK YOU and we hope you enjoy all of your benefits! Please feel free to check out our website for some additional offerings. We now offer a job posting tab and we will also be soliciting our sponsors and any vendors to put ads out there as well. This will be helpful when maybe you are looking for new vendor for services that you may need at your facility!

Treasury report

Erica Methven

Income/Expense Comparison by Category - Year to Date
1/1/2023 through 2/14/2024

Category	1/1/2023- 2/14/2023	1/1/2024- 2/14/2024	Amount Difference
INCOME			
50_50 Raffle	0.00	122.00	122.00
Corporate Sponsorship	750.00	2,000.00	1,250.00
Membership	1,470.00	190.00	-1,280.00
Silent Auction Income	0.00	385.00	385.00
Spring Payer Meeting	100.00	0.00	-100.00
Winter Conference	0.00	90.00	90.00
TOTAL INCOME	2,320.00	2,787.00	467.00
EXPENSES			
Uncategorized	0.00	1,442.00	-1,442.00
Board meeting	0.00	188.04	-188.04
Clover Maint Fee	4.95	9.90	-4.95
Clover Processing Fee	0.00	107.23	-107.23
Insurance	600.00	0.00	600.00
Newsletter	110.00	0.00	110.00
Pay Pal Fee	13.86	0.00	13.86
Presidents Meeting Expense	0.00	113.71	-113.71
Supplies	123.95	0.00	123.95
TOTAL EXPENSES	852.76	1,860.88	-1,008.12
OVERALL TOTAL	1,467.24	926.12	-541.12

APPEALING READMISSION DENIALS FOR MEDICARE ELIGIBLE PATIENTS

Charles J. Hilton

Medicare's Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program (HRRP) requires payments to hospitals with excess readmissions to be reduced by a calculated factor, as an incentive for hospitals to implement strategies to reduce the number of preventable readmissions. The Medicare regulations set forth in Title 42, Sections 412.150-412.154 of the Code of Federal Regulations sets forth the methodology to calculate a penalty to be imposed on hospitals based on the frequency of readmissions within 30 days that Medicare deems preventable for certain diagnoses. This formula, or "readmission payment adjustment factor" affects all Medicare payments to the hospital.

However, be cognizant that private Medicare managed care plans, in addition to applying the readmission payment adjustment factor to all Medicare payments, may also try to impose an additional burden on hospitals which is not in accordance with the Medicare HRRP. For example, we have seen a private Medicare managed care company outright deny, carte blanche, all readmissions if they occur within 30 days of discharge. Moreover, it labeled this policy "Medicare Readmission Policy for DRG Based Providers." In reviewing the Medicare regulations related to the HRRP, there is no statutory and/or regulatory requirement that the private Medicare managed care plan outright deny claims for readmissions if they occur within 30 days of the original claim. The required action authorized by Medicare's HRRP is the reduction of all Medicare payments to the hospital calculated pursuant to the readmission payment adjustment factor, which the private Medicare managed care insurer follows. Again, be aware that if the Medicare managed care plan implements additional policies, such as systematically denying all admissions within 30 days of a previous admission, those actions would not be in accordance with Medicare's HRRP.

If a claim is denied by a Medicare managed care plan due to a readmission determination, it is suggested that the hospital file an appeal. In addition to arguing that the Medicare HRRP does not require systematic denial of readmissions, the hospital may assert that such a denial is a violation of Pennsylvania case law. In Pennsylvania, if an insurer is invoking an exclusionary provision to exclude coverage, the insurer bears the burden of proving that the exclusionary provision is applicable to this particular set of facts. The burden is NOT on the hospital to prove that the facts are not within the policy exclusion.

The hospital may also argue that the Medicare managed care plan's policy of automatically denying an admission if it is within 30 days of a previous admission is a violation of the Pennsylvania Unfair Insurance Practices Act, 40 P.S. § 1171.5. This statute states that if an insurer fails to adopt and implement reasonable standards for the prompt investigation of claims and refuses to pay claims without a reasonable investigation based upon all available information, it constitutes unfair claims practices. 40 P.S. § 1171.5 (a)(10)(iii) and (iv).

Medicare's Hospital Readmission Reduction Program is limited to the aforementioned factor reductions. However, if a Medicare managed care plan imposes additional penalties, such as outright denying a claim as a prohibited readmission, the above legal arguments can be espoused in an appeal to the carrier, including any clinical/medical arguments that can distinguish the two admissions. Our experience in filing these appeals has resulted in overturning readmission denials into compensable claims.

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

Charles J. Hilton & Associates, P.C.
Attorneys at Law
Oakmont Station Two
527 Cedar Way
Suite 203
Oakmont, PA 15139

The Hospital Revenue Cycle Law Firm

SCHOLARSHIP FUND - WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS?

Christine Ifft

As many of you know, Pennsylvania Three Rivers has a Scholarship fund. The Scholarship fund is funded by our 50/50 raffles and from generous sponsors. Most think of Scholarship funds as having to be used for college and having to write a dissertation to receive it. Not at Pennsylvania Three Rivers AAHAM! Ask yourself a few questions to see if maybe you would like to apply for one:

1. Do you work for a provider (hospital, health system, clinic, etc....)? If so, go to #2
2. Does your employer pay or reimburse for meetings/conferences, certifications, membership, or webinars? If not, go to #3
3. Do you want to attend an AAHAM conference, take a certification test, become a member or attend a webinar but could use some assistance since you have to pay out of your own pocket? If so, go to #4.
4. You may qualify to receive a scholarship from Pennsylvania Three Rivers AAHAM!! Go to #5
5. You can apply here: https://threeriversaaham.com/Scholarship_Program

We would love to see you at one of our meetings/conferences or help you to become certified or obtain CEUs! Give it a try!

