

Summer 2013 Issue Seven

NAHAM's Educational Items

NAHAM, the leader in patient Access Services, is opening its doors to additional and more comprehensive learning materials designed to help you prepare for examinations, learn more about a specific topic (s) or educate those in your organization in a particular area of interest.

Choose between our array of Educational items and have them mailed to you with no additional shipping cost today!

Learn more and purchase today by visiting www.naham.org/education



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CHAM, CHAA reach new standard of excellence, receive NCCA stamp of approval

On March 26, 2013, the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) granted accreditation to the National Association of Healthcare Access Management's (NAHAM's) Certified Healthcare Access Manager (CHAM) and Certified Healthcare Access Associate (CHAA) certifications for demonstrating compliance with the NCCA Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs.

NCCA is the accrediting body of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (formerly the National Organization for Competency Assurance). The NCCA Standards were created in 1977 and updated in 2003 to ensure certification programs adhere to modern standards of practice for the certification industry.

NAHAM joins an elite group of more than 120 organizations representing over 270 programs that have received and maintained NCCA accreditation.

This accomplishment is something to be shared! When promoting the NAHAM Credential to your organization, share this accomplishment and its value to all NAHAM certificants!

"This accreditation represents a significant recognition for NAHAM certification," said NAHAM Certification Commission Chair Elizabeth Reason, CHAM. "Approval from NCCA speaks to the quality of the CHAM and CHAA programs and the caliber of individuals who hold these designations."



NAHAM's certification programs promote best practices, standards, and subject matter expertise and enable certificants to influence and promote the high-quality delivery of patient access services. Patient access services professionals provide quality services in registration and all of its support processes to patients, providers and payers into, through and out of their health care experience.

Currently, over 700 patient access managers are certified to use the CHAM designation, and over 5,000 patient access associates are certified to use the CHAA designation.

More information on the NCCA is available online at www.credentialingexcellence.org/NCCA or by calling 202.367.1125.

NAHAM

Certification Commission

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Cleveland County HealthCare System
Shelby, NC

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Cancer Center
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Certification Manager

CertAlert is a publication of The National Association of Healthcare Access Management in Washington, DC.



In Their Own Words:

Champlain Valley Physicians' Hospital; Leadership Promoting Results

The leadership team of Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital located in Plattsburgh, New York, has recently made it a requirement of all patient access staff to take the Certified Healthcare Access Associate (CHAA) exam within fifteen months of hire. CVPH is a 330 bed regional medical center with a broad array of services, (both on and off site) and employees a patient access team of approximately fifty-five.

We strongly believe the patient access staff are vital and one of the most important parts of the revenue cycle. It is imperative that we have an educated and skilled workforce in our access department. Therefore, we have chosen to make it a requirement for all of our access associates to become certified by taking and passing the exam.

In conjunction with this, additional educational requirements were put in place and their pay scales were raised significantly. Some of those educational requirements include a course and

certificate in medical terminology and a certificate in basic coding. We believe all these items are imperative in determining medical necessity, issuing ABN's, understanding all the requirements of access and being the first point of contact with the patients.

We were looking to improve the quality of our staff, the quality of our work and reduce turnover in the department and NAHAM is giving us the tools to help us achieve those goals. The Certified Healthcare Access Associate exam is a significant part of this pathway. We gave all existing staff a deadline to meet the new requirements and all new hires must meet all the requirements as well. We also renamed our positions to Healthcare Access Associates and once they pass the exam they are named Certified Healthcare Access Associates.

Thank you, NAHAM for giving us this excellent tool!

*Written by: Kathy Peterson, FHFMA
Director of Patient Financial Services
CVPH Medical Center*



CVPH Medical Center, Plattsburgh, New York

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: National Healthcare Access Personnel Week is March 31—April 6, 2014!

By supporting "Access Week", you are showing your access team that you appreciate their hard work and encourage their efforts as goodwill ambassadors for the entire hospital. A recognition program implemented during this special week is an excellent means of enhancing guest relations, increasing hospital morale, and improving communications. Log on for more information on how you can get your organization involved today!



In December 2011, NAHAM launched Certification Central; your one-stop shop to apply for and maintain your credential. From direct emails into your applicant home inbox to all past and future Certification Maintenance dates, Certification Central has taken all things NAHAM Credential related and put them in a single individualized dashboard, available 24/7 for any and all certification-related needs.

The deadline for the October testing window is August 31st!

Help employers match job requirements with your qualifications and skill; completing a certification program shows that you can acquire new knowledge and skills quickly and easily, enabling you grow at the speed of new technologies. Start your journey towards becoming a Certified Healthcare Access Manager (CHAM) or Certified Healthcare Access Associate (CHAA) today!

Thoroughly review our [Candidate Guide to Certification](#) and then consider applying for our October examination window!

How to Enroll:

First Timers - Signing up in Certification Central (for non-members and non certificants only)

Go to NAHAM's home page www.naham.org

1. Go to right side of the page under "Sign in" and click "haven't joined yet"
2. Scroll to the bottom and click "non-member"
3. Enter your first name, last name, select your region and enter preferred username (usually email address).

4. From there you will fill out your contact information and create a password, which will be stored to your profile in Certification Central. *You are logged-in to Certification Central after you submit at step #5. You may go directly to <https://certification.naham.org/> and be logged-in there as well!*

For a full overview of the process in PDF form please click [here](#). For the complete Webinar, complete with voice over, please click [here](#).

Please contact NAHAM with any questions by emailing info@naham.org or calling 202.367.1125.

Congratulations to the over 3,100 CHAMs and CHAAs that successfully recertified their credential(s) in the designated April and June 2013 recertification months! Don't forget, you may upload your earned hours at any time by logging into your dashboard in Certification Central.

Quick Facts:

- Minimum 30 (thirty) contact hours are required for the CHAA, 60 (sixty) for CHAM.
- CHAA Certification Maintenance fee is \$25.
- CHAM Certification Maintenance fee is \$50 for [members](#) and \$100 for non-members.
- CHAA certified [Associate Members](#) of NAHAM recertify free of charge but must report their CEU's.
- Organizations may still pay with group checks.
- You will need to keep hard copies of everything in case of an audit.
- You will be participating in the 2014 certification maintenance cycle if you earned or renewed your credential in 2012 or an even year before that.

Once logged in, your **home screen/dashboard** will let you know once you have enough hours input to submit your renewal application; please note **you are only able to submit your application starting on the first day of the renewal cycle**; which is April 1st of the CHAA maintenance year and June 1st of the CHAM maintenance year.

You may view our [Certification Maintenance Tutorial](#) at any time for a step-by-step walk-through of the process.

Aren't sure what you can report or how many Contact Hours your professional development activities are worth? Please refer to the [NAHAM Contact Hour Guide](#) for guidance.



A One Stop Shop:

The New Certification Landing Page

In order to make Certification even more convenient for those looking to become certified or those maintaining their current credential, the NAHAM marketing department has created a single landing page for all things certification.

Simply click “Certification” on the NAHAM home page and click the appropriate buttons that will guide you through to the certification that’s right for you, or to your dashboard should you need to enter credits.

Want to find up-to-date statistics on the year so far? Need to reference the Candidate Guide to Certification? It’s all on the landing page as well.

From maintaining your certification to promoting it to a colleague for the first time, the landing page is easy to navigate with its user-friendly language and easy to navigate buttons. [Take a look today!](#)

Attention all Certificants!

Have trouble keeping up with your hard copies of your recertification and/or initial attempt certificates? Recently misplaced one and need to confirm your certification status?

A new feature has been added to your dashboard in Certification Central so you can instantaneously retrieve your most current certificate! Simply log-in to your dashboard and click on “Print Certification Maintenance Card.” Your certification is always secure and up-to-date and now with the convenience you need.

We Want to Know...

Does Your facility Require the CHAM or CHAA?

As you read earlier in this issue (and in the last issue as well) we profiled Champlain Valley Physicians' Hospital (CVPH) in Plattsburgh, New York, documenting their journey on the road to becoming a hospital with their entire access staff on the road to becoming CHAM and CHAA credential holders.

NAHAM wants to know; is there a movement going on in your facility requiring access workers to become certified in order to keep and/or become an employee of your organization? If so, how was the program implemented and what steps are you taking to make sure it stays in place (incentives being offered, etc)?

The NAHAM Credential Program grows bigger everyday, and we want to share your organizations success stories with our membership and certification base!

Please email NAHAM at info@naham.org with your story, and you could be featured in the next issue of *CertAlert!* Let us know the steps from the idea to implement the credentials, to the key people who are running the day-to-day credentialing operations at your facility.

We look forward to hearing from you and spreading the word about your facilities success in the Access field!





Click. Communicate. Promote.

Reminder...

It is extremely important that all candidates read the Candidate Guide to Certification as well as the "Before You Apply" section of our website before applying for the CHAM and/or CHAA Examination.

*A candidate who does not pass the examination on their first attempt and who wishes to test again at the discounted fee of \$20 **must enroll in the next examination administration and must remit the examination retake fee.** If you take the examination during a later administration period then the full application fee of \$100 applies.*

Taking on the latest form of social media, NAHAM is thrilled to announce the arrival of Twitter and YouTube to our media landscape! Follow our Twitter today @MyNAHAM to get updates on policy changes, healthcare acts, industry technology changes, and certification/membership reminders and updates.

Also new is the NAHAM YouTube Channel! Check out our new CHAM & CHAA promotional video, including testimonials from CHAMs and CHAAs touting the value of the certification, the process of getting certified, and the recent NCCA accreditation seal of approval. Share this video with your network of potential CHAMs and CHAAs at <http://bit.ly/13hTR6U>.

We want to know what YOU think of NAHAM social media. Are you using the NAHAM website to get updates on information, or do you rely on our social media updates? Let us know!

Have something you would like NAHAM to post? Email us at info@naham.org with what you want us to convey to our media followers!

The NAHAM Proctor Database

Just as important as it is to have candidate participation in the NAHAM Credential Program, the same is to be said for qualified proctors—they are one half of our success!

NAHAM has created a volunteer [Proctor database](#) of NAHAM Proctors who have agreed to oversee applicants taking the CHAM or CHAA examinations. It is important to note that not all CHAM and CHAA candidates have direct access to training/development in their organizations, and by signing up to proctor a candidates examination, you are giving them the chance to take the examination and reach their career goals.

If you would like to be a [NAHAM Proctor](#), you must be manager-level or above and not the direct supervisor of anyone you are proctoring. You do not need to be CHAM certified to proctor through NAHAM.

All CHAM and CHAA examinations must be proctored, and examination applicants must inform NAHAM of their proctor's identity at the time of application. The responsibilities of NAHAM Certification Examination proctors include ensuring a proper testing site, providing the candidates with their private examination access codes, guarding against any irregularities during the examination, and others matters. All proctors must complete the complimentary [Proctor Training module](#) offered through our website.

NAHAM requires for any examination administration involving five or more candidates that a minimum of two qualified individuals simultaneously proctor the examination.

We have started collecting information and continue to do so; reminder that candidates can now [search this database](#) to find proctors in their area as well! Qualified proctors are valued and needed for the continued success of the NAHAM Credential Program, sign up today!



CHAA Spotlight:

Daanish Bukhari, CHAA, BS
Registrar

**Champlain Valley Physicians
Hospital (CVPH Medical Center)**

Plattsburgh, New York

CHAA since July 12, 2013



*Are you interested in being
"Spotlighted" in a future issue
of CertAlert?*

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

*Contact info@naham.org
and tell us who you would like
to see in a future
issue.*

*NAHAM will contact selected
certificants to confirm their
participation and conduct inter-
views.*

What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?

Ever since I joined my department in 2011, I was familiar with the NAHAM CHAA certification program. My immediate supervisor and mentor had obtained the certification and that gave me inspiration to follow her footsteps. Over time, and with increased knowledge and experience in the Patient Access field, I began to seriously consider obtaining a certification for a multitude of reasons.

What is the most rewarding aspect of having the CHAA?

In my view, the single most rewarding aspect is the attainment of a sense of achievement and confidence. One can only excel in a given field if one takes pride in the job they do and possess the confidence that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the demands placed upon them. Having the CHAA certification gives Access professionals this sense of achievement and confidence and improves their professional self-esteem. It earns them the respect of their peers and their leadership.

Would you recommend NAHAM Credentialing program to others?

I would highly recommend it to any Patient Access professional. It is a must for anyone who takes pride in their job and for anyone who wants to excel in this particular field. It is a recognition of one's ability and a way of getting the respect of peers who acknowledge that such a credential denotes higher level of job competence.

What were your reasons for seeking certification?

First, I wanted to increase my knowledge and competence in this field and I viewed certification as a way of doing that. Second, I feel that having a certification in a particular field makes one highly marketable in an increasingly competitive job environment. The twin combo of experience and certification makes one an attractive candidate to employers as compared to non-credentialed applicants.

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

I believe the biggest difference is in the quantum of knowledge. My preparation for the CHAA greatly

enhanced my work-related knowledge and gave me more insight on how to deal with situations that arise in the Patient Access field. I take satisfaction in that I can contribute more effectively to my department. There is also an added advantage. In my department, being credentialed also puts one at a higher pay scale than non-credentialed peers. Thus, seeking credentialing is akin to a promotion and certainly a motivating factor.

What have been the rewards of earning your credential?

In my view, the single most rewarding aspect is the attainment of a sense of achievement and confidence. One can only excel in a given field if one takes pride in the job they do and possess the confidence that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the demands placed upon them. Having the CHAA certification gives Access professionals this sense of achievement and confidence and improves their professional self-esteem. It earns them the respect of their peers and their leadership.

What does your hospital's executive management think of your earning of the CHAA Credential?

I have been fortunate in that my hospital's administration and department leadership has been very supportive of those seeking to earn the CHAA credential. It is the progressive vision of the leadership that they are gradually moving towards a fully credentialed Access department to promote delivery of higher quality services to the patients and customers of Access services. Not only do they encourage their Access staff to obtain the credential, but they also reward credentialed staff with an increased pay scale.

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

A lot of professionals in the Patient Access field have a tough time recognizing the importance of certification. They feel that certification is a tedious process and a hurdle. But the benefits of credentialing are tremendous. My advice would be to approach the certification with an open mind, and to do a cost benefit analysis of obtaining CHAA. They would realize that the benefits far outweigh the costs. Then, once they have made their mind to earn their credential, I would advise them to draw as much as possible from their work experience for their test preparation and to use the NAHAM CHAA study guide as the frontline resource to guide their preparation for the test.



CHAM Spotlight:

Charissa McCarthy-Pullmann, CHAM

Access Learning Consultant
Integris Health

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

CHAM since October 11, 2011



What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?

My Administrative Director, Amber Harris, is CHAM certified, and she encouraged her direct reports to become certified as well. NAHAM has always been an important organization here at INTEGRIS Health. After hearing more and reading more, about the certification, I decided to pursue the opportunity.

What is the most rewarding aspect of having the CHAM?

The thing I find most rewarding about having the CHAM certification is the sense of accomplishment it brings to me personally. Professionally, it opens up doors of communication to speak to others about my profession and it also builds confidence in others that my expertise in the area is backed by a national certification.

Would you recommend NAHAM to others?

I would and do recommend certification to others because it is a great personal accomplishment, it is a great way to distinguish yourself professionally, and it is a national certification that communicates to others your hard work and sense of commitment to your profession. A national certification also is recognized in different job markets and it is a transferable recognition.

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

Certification lets others know that you have made the investment (both financial and time) to become nationally certified. It shows commitment to your profession and to professional growth.

Was earning a credential in healthcare something you aspired for?

Earning a certification in any profession is something that brings more credibility and often brings more clarity than simply a job title or job description, so it made sense for me to earn this credential.

What were your reasons for seeking certification?

I sought certification at the encouragement of my boss, and because we promote a culture here at INTEGRIS of excellence. Certification is part of that distinction.

What did you expect the certification process to be like?

I heard that the process was rigorous and challenging. I expected the questions to be full-scope; covering a broad range of patient access services.

Was the NAHAM Certification process what you expected?

Absolutely! It was very challenging! I studied every day for at least an hour for several months, and the exam called on me to use all my experiences in healthcare and all my time studying.

What have been the rewards of earning your credential?

It has been a great personal reward. If times get difficult, I simply remind myself that I took and passed the CHAM certification. It is also rewarding to be able to wear the CHAM pin on my name badge and to be able to explain what the acronym of "CHAM" stands for when communicating with others. It's rewarding to be able to give more insight into our industry and the standards of excellence that INTEGRIS Health promotes.

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

Go for it! Study, learn, experience as much as you can in patient access by job-shadowing different roles, talking with others and learning. Becoming certified is a gift you give yourself. Just like education or professional growth, it is something you take with you wherever you go and it is something no one can take away from you.

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

We are very fortunate that our executive management team is very supportive of certification and encourage all to take the CHAM or CHAA exam(s), respectively. INTEGRIS Health has been in partnership with and a proponent of the NAHAM organization for a long time. This is a relationship we are proud of, and we hope to continue to grow in the area of certification and involvement. Thank you!



Facility Spotlight:

Sarasota Memorial Hospital

Sarasota, Florida

Over 55 Certified CHAM & CHAA Individuals

Sarasota Memorial Health Care System, an 806-bed regional medical center, is among the largest public health systems in Florida. With 4,000 staff, 802 physicians and 1,000 volunteers, it is one of Sarasota County's largest employers. A community hospital founded in 1925, it is a full-service health system, with specialized expertise in heart, vascular, cancer, and neuroscience services, as well as a network of outpatient centers, long-term care and rehabilitation among its many programs. Sarasota Memorial is the only hospital providing obstetrical services, pediatrics and Level III neonatal intensive care in Sarasota County.

Special thanks to Robb Wilburn, CHAM, for his contribution to this article. Please visit www.smh.org for more information!

What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?

When I first became a Director I really didn't know what was required of my position, so I started doing research and I found NAHAM. I found an old publication and it mentioned the CHAM certification and how beneficial it would be to my career.

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

The conferences are a great resource, the knowledge you obtain is priceless. Also, I like the website as a resource.

What are the benefits to your employees?

The certification program CHAA/CHAM has opened the world of Access to my staff as well as my managers. It has challenged them to keep up their education to retain their certification, and for many of my staff it allowed them to receive a promotion with meant a pay increase.

How is the patient access healthcare profession changing?

In the past access staff had to know what was going on in their facility, now they are required to learn more global changes in health care.



What benefits does certification bring to your hospital?

It brings credibility to the front end, and it shows the organization how important Access is to the organization. It also shows the organization how committed we are to education.

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

Yes, because the education requirement will require staff to stay up to date on changes in the industry.

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

Yes, for many of my positions based on level it's a requirement.

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

Having credentialed staff will give us a higher quality of Access staff. It will improve customer service scores, cash collections, and increase our registration accuracy scores.

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

Health care is about staying informed of regulatory changes and changes within the industry, mandating continuous education will help keep you abreast of these changes.

Please provide any additional comments that you would like to share:

I would like to see more organizations require certification for their hourly staff as well as management. I was recruited for my current position in Florida from Ohio because I was certified.

Have your hospital highlighted in an upcoming issue of CertAlert!

Contact us at info@naham.org and tell us why your facility should be profiled in an upcoming issue.



Dates to Remember...

- **August 31, 2013**

Deadline to sign-up for the examinations in the October testing window.

- **November 30, 2013**

Deadline to sign-up for the examinations in the January testing window.

- **March 31 - April 6, 2014**

National Patient Access Week 2014

- **May 13-16, 2014**

NAHAM's 40th Annual Educational Conference & Exposition, Hollywood, FL
(www.naham.org/conference). *Earn up to 22 contact hours!*

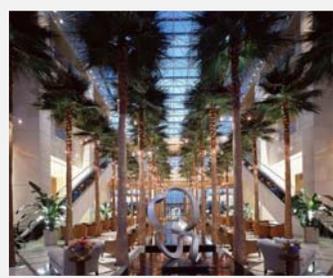
Have a special date you want to see in CertAlert?

Send the information to info@naham.org or give us a call at (202) 367-1125.

Save the Date...

Please join NAHAM for its 40th Annual Educational Conference & Exposition

Patient Access to Admitting: 40 Years of Leadership



May 13-16, 2014

**Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa
Hollywood, Florida**

Earn up to 22 Contact hours!

For more information please visit www.naham.org/conference