

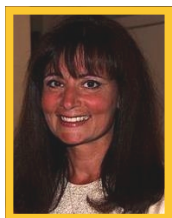
# Issue Nine, Late Summer 2014



The leading resource for managing  
successful patient access services.

# Cert Alert

## NAHAM's Professional Credential Resource



A MESSAGE FROM OUR 2015  
CERTIFICATION COMMISSIONER,  
ANNEMARIE MARIANI

Dear Reader:

Hello and welcome to the Summer-Fall issue of Cert Alert! I'm excited to have been elected as the new certification commission chair and to be able to share with you our quarterly issue of *CertAlert*. We are dedicated to assisting you in obtaining and maintaining your NAHAM Certification and to promote lifelong learning. We hope that you find this publication a good source of information and we welcome your ideas, feedback and comments. Please take note that we are changing our NAHAM contact hour requirements for recertification beginning with those CHAMs who re-certify next June, more information can be found in this issue. Thank you and I hope you are enjoying your summer!

Warm Regards,

Annemarie Mariani, CHAM

Follow us!



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# NAHAM-provided contact hours to be added to CHAM requirements starting in 2015



Starting with the maintenance cycle in June 2015, ten (10) of the sixty (60) CHAM contact hours must be NAHAM approved contact hours. Specific NAHAM approved contact hours will be added online in early 2015, for entry starting in June 2015 and cycle approval in June 2017.



An example of NAHAM provided hours will be webinars, annual conference attendance and serving as a NAHAM volunteer. Certification is valid for a period of two (2) years, at which time certificants must complete the required number of professional development contact hours, recertification application and submit a fee for their respective credential.

Please remember that NAHAM audits 10% of all recertification applicants, so it is very important to save any hard copies of certificates of completion you obtain during these two (2) years.



*Click. Communicate. Connect.*



Facebook is your avenue to view all things NAHAM including reminders on certification deadlines, next steps towards maintaining your certification and membership notifications.



Follow the NAHAM account to get updates on policy changes, healthcare acts, industry technology changes, certification/membership reminders and updates with links to our NAHAM BlogSpot and Newsbrief.



Our new YouTube Channel includes a CHAM & CHAA promotional video, as well as a promotional membership video. Submit videos from your facility and we'll add them to our channel!



Stay on top of NAHAM's industry efforts by signing up for the NAHAM BlogSpot. Weekly updates provide new insight to the way our industry is seen on the Hill and what we can expect moving forward.



LinkedIn profiles NAHAM updates as well as industry questions from other NAHAM professionals and industry experts. Get answers fast and post your inquiries any day, any time!



**How the Carolinas HealthCare System changed their front-end operations, and why they incorporated the CHAA Credential as part of their standard of excellence to do it.**

In 2002, Corporate Patient Access at Carolinas HealthCare System in Charlotte, NC developed a Career Ladder in conjunction with an Incentive Program for the Access staff. The goal was to establish a program that would encourage teammate growth. Our Career Ladder consists of three levels:

**Level I Requirements**

All teammates that have completed their first ninety (90) days and have consistently met the department goal for quality, MSP, productivity, and up-front cash collections are considered Level I Team members.

**Level II Requirements**

- Team member for one (1) year in Corporate Patient Access
- Successful Performance Appraisal
- No verbal or written reprimands in the last six (6) months
- Completed two educational classes in addition to the ACE and PACE modules (transcript required)
- Continues to meet department goals for QA, MSP, productivity, and collections
- Pass the Level II Exam with a score of ninety (90) or above

**Level III Requirements**

- Team member for a minimum of two (2) years in Corporate Patient Access
- Successful or Exceeds Performance Appraisal
- No verbal or written reprimands in the last six (6) months
- Cross trained in other departments within the corporate family with emphasis on increased job functions/process compared to current knowledge level as a Level II Registrar
- Maintain a Level II certification for at least one (1) year and pass the Level II recertification exam
- Continues to meet departmental goals for QA, MSP, productivity, and collections
- Work in staffing at another facility/department for two (2) weeks
- Pass the NAHAM Certified Healthcare Access Associate (CHAA) exam

We chose the CHAA exam for the Level III for several reasons; the CHAA is a nationally recognized certification that sets our registrars apart from their peers. Successful completion demonstrates the teammate's desire for professional growth and gives our patients confidence their account is in qualified hands.

The CHAA requires our teammates to take a broader look at the issues facing Patient Access and helps them to understand and challenge the processes that govern their day to day work. We believe the national recognition and broad scope of topics covered by the CHAA made it a perfect choice to top our career ladder and give our teammates the recognition they deserve.

*Content provided to NAHAM by Cindy Criswell, Director, Corporate Patient Access, Pre-Service & Jonathan Johnson, Manager, Corporate Patient Access, Pre-Service at Carolinas Healthcare System*

# NAHAM CERTIFICATION COMMISSION

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Access Management in  
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# Certification Central

## Dates to Remember

*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!**

**H**elp employers match job requirements with your qualifications and skills; completing a certification program shows that you can acquire new knowledge and skills quickly and easily, enabling you to 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](http://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](mailto:info@naham.org) or calling 202.367.1125.

**C**ongratulations to the over 1,700 CHAMs and CHAAs that successfully recertified their credential(s) in the designated April and June 2014 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 (10 must be NAHAM offered).

- 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 2016 certification maintenance cycle if you earned or renewed your credential in 2014 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.

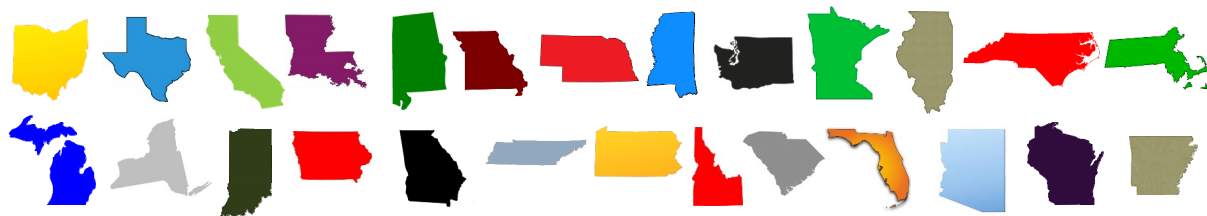
You may view our [Certification Maintenance Tutorial](#) at any time for a step-by-step walk-through of the process.

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.

## Reminder...

All candidates must 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.



# Affiliate *State of Mind*

NAHAM Affiliate associations are groups that are established at a state or regional level to support the education and professional development of access professionals. A state/regional affiliate association operates independent of NAHAM; however, there is a relationship to NAHAM. NAHAM will provide support to the organization and the state/regional affiliate chapter has NAHAM resources available to them.

Currently NAHAM supports 29 Affiliates; some for regions, tri-state areas and for very active access states, two affiliates! The affiliate establishes a Board of Directors to ensure a structure to sustain the activities of the association. Keep in mind, the Board of Directors is a volunteer position and it is very rewarding to know that you are helping in the advancement of the access profession for your state or region.

Review the Affiliate Handbook for detailed information and feel free to ask us for assistance. In creating an affiliate YOU ARE NOT ALONE! Your NAHAM Regional Delegate and the NAHAM Ambassador are here to assist you to start and sustain your association. An Affiliate Toolkit is being developed to provide ease in the creation of an affiliate.

To find out how to start an Affiliate chapter or become more involved with your existing chapter, visit [www.naham.org](http://www.naham.org) and select *Groups > NAHAM Affiliates*.

## NATIONAL HEALTHCARE ACCESS WEEK IS APRIL 5-11, 2015!



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. Visit the NAHAM website for more information about getting your organization involved today!

## **CHAM Spotlight:**

**Karen Schneebeli, BS, CHAM**

**Manager, Patient Registration  
Samaritan Medical Center**

**Watertown, New York  
CHAM since March 29, 2007**

**2013 NAHAM DALE WILLIAMS SCHOLAR**



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

Patient Access/Registration is a specialized part of the healthcare environment. Many times we are the patient's first point of contact with a healthcare organization and we are a vital part of the revenue cycle. NAHAM's certification program is specific to what we do and I wanted a certification that was very applicable to this area of healthcare.

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

The most rewarding aspect of having the CHAM is that I am able to demonstrate that I have obtained a specific level of knowledge about this profession.

### **Would you recommend NAHAM to others?**

I definitely would recommend the NAHAM credentialing program. Patient Access/Registration is now being seen by some as a career field rather than an entry level position in healthcare and credentialing validates this transition.

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

The CHAM certification is recognized nationally by other managers in the field as well as healthcare facilities.

### **Was earning a credential in healthcare something you aspired for?**

I did aspire to become credentialed. It was a goal that I set for myself.

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

I sought credentialing because it demonstrates to others that I have a certain level of knowledge regarding this profession and a vested interest in it.

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

I thought it might be a bit more complicated than it was. It was simple to obtain the study guide and sign up for the test.

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

The rewards have been personal and professional. I set a personal goal and achieved it. I also feel that having my CHAM has been an asset to my career.

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

Go for it! Learn as much as you can about all aspects of the revenue cycle. The scheduling process, registration, patient types and how they affect billing, insurance, and the various regulations that govern reimbursement. Additionally, become very familiar with the CMS website and never stop learning.

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

Although I had already obtained my CHAM before becoming employed at Samaritan Medical Center, they are very supportive of my involvement with NAHAM and recognize the value of my certification.

*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 [ifo@naham.org](mailto:ifo@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 Interviews.*

# **CHAA Spotlight:**

## **William Witty, CHAA**

***Supervisor, RCS Patient  
Financial Navigation***  
**Indiana University Health Methodist  
Hospital**

**Indianapolis, Indiana**  
**CHAA since January 18, 2014**



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

I was drawn to the NAHAM CHAA Certification program directly through my desire to achieve self-growth in my chosen role.

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

I've worked hard to earn the Certification, the credentials illustrate my personal achievement and recognition for my elected career path. My goal is to encourage others to do the same.

### **Would you recommend NAHAM Credentialing program to others?**

Absolutely I would! Anyone interested in taking their career to the next level will find it particularly rewarding, both from a professional and personal perspective.

### **What did you expect the Certification Process to be like?**

The process was much as I would have anticipated. Individual study coupled with on-the-job experience provides a healthy working knowledge in preparation for the exam. I'd definitely recommend attending the review session offered a week prior to the exam to help prepare and answer any last minute questions someone may have.

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

My personal reasons for taking the CHAA were both professional as well as personal; to take the next challenge.

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

I have the privilege of working with many others in my field and not all of them have attained their CHAA. It's immediate recognition for knowing your chosen field and validates a standard of working knowledge within the industry. Attainment is a very proud moment.

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

The primary reward has been fulfilling one of my many self-assigned milestones as I move through my career. As a hard-working, ambitious individual, it's very satisfying to earn the CHAA. I anticipate taking the CHAM within the next year or two.

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

I'd definitely recommend credentialing to anyone that's interested in patient access. Credentialing, in general, is a good thing as it will distinguish those who have made the effort and taken the time to study for and pass the exam. It's self-rewarding and serves to demonstrate to your fellow team members your personal commitment to your career and your establishment as a valued resource.

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

Executive Leadership definitely encourages credentialing! I received very positive feedback and it felt great. It's viewed as a positive step in the right direction as we want as many staff as possible to attain their CHAA, CHAM for leadership. In my current role as Supervisor of Patient Financial Navigation I have encouraged my front line team members to seriously consider the CHAA. I'm proud that one of them has already attained their CHAA!

# Facility Spotlight:

## University Hospitals CASE MEDICAL CENTER

### Cleveland, Ohio

#### Over 100 Certified CHAM & CHAA Individuals

*University Hospitals Case Medical Center is a 1,032-bed tertiary medical center specializing in adult/pediatric medical and surgical specialties. UH has once again been named one of the nation's top hospitals, according to U.S. News & World Report's annual Best Hospitals rankings, ranking in all 12 methodology-ranked specialties and in the Top 20 in four specialties - Cancer, Gastroenterology, Ear, Nose & Throat, and Orthopedics. This vision for University Hospitals led in 1895 to our formal ties with what is now the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. As an affiliate of the medical school, we grew to become one of the nation's great centers of academic medicine and the region's leading provider of high quality healthcare. To the people of Greater Cleveland, we came to exemplify hope, mercy and humanity.*

*Thanks to Maria H. Kamenos, VP Patient Access Services  
for her contribution to this article.*

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

As someone managing a very large Patient Access department in an integrated health system, the NAHAM credential ensures a level of expertise with revenue cycle concepts, which translate to better quality in the work that we do. It is also a way to provide critical staff development for our teams, and to support the career pathways that we have established which allow for promotional opportunities based on performance and expertise on the job. The ongoing CEU requirement to maintain CHAA and CHAM ensures that certification holders will continue to learn and stay up to date on industry changes throughout their careers.

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

As it relates to certification, the NAHAM website for CHAM/CHAA is very easy to use and works well. The study guides seem to give the staff enough information to prepare for the test, but the test itself is not just a carbon copy of the study guide. It requires the staff person to really know the job. In general, the information shared on the NAHAM website and through the *Access Management Journal* is always useful.

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

We worked with our HR department to include CHAA and CHAM in our internal certification recognition program, so that recipients of CHAA/CHAM receive a monetary bonus and potential reimbursement for the costs associated with taking the exam. They also become eligible for promotion to a senior level in the following roles: Patient Access Representative, Scheduling Coordinator and Financial Clearance Representative. It is also required for our Systems Analyst/QA/Trainer positions and any leadership level role in the department. Though earning a CHAA/CHAM is no guarantee of a promotion, it does position staff for advancement. It also instills a sense of pride in the team for having earned the credential, which is associated with having a level of expertise about their job. Even



when staff are preparing for the exam, we have seen them form cross-departmental study groups which helps promote teamwork and camaraderie across the organization.

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

The profession is moving traditional business office functions to the front end, so front end staff are armed with the same tools, training and expertise as our billing department staff. In addition, we do it all with the highest degree of customer care, as the patient experience often starts with us. As we continue, I foresee less emphasis on capturing demographic data as patients will be providing that via their health record portals, and more emphasis on real time claims adjudication at the front end. We will be performing Financial Counselor specific functions more broadly, so that the registration and scheduling positions of old will be replaced by hybrid positions that carry a wide range of revenue cycle responsibilities. Scheduling will focus on timely access and coordination of patient care across provider networks, and will likely include a fair amount of "sales" especially as services become commoditized.

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

Our health system benefits by having a better-trained, more equipped staff at the front end, which ensures better service to our patients. It also allows employees to learn and grow in their field, and to qualify for promotional opportunities.

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

It will help, especially to the extent which the credential itself keeps pace with market changes. The credential must change to reflect the new realities in the industry, and if it does, will continue to be associated with high quality and expertise.

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

Yes, as more traditional billing functions move to the front end of the process, and now that access to healthcare is a top of mind issue across the country. All of these changes impact Patient Access and make it a more complex profession than ever before. Credentialing can ensure that Patient Access professionals have a broad knowledge of these topics and understand exactly how their role has an impact on the patient's care, experience and the success of the organization.

#### Additional comments:

Many thanks to NAHAM for continuing to provide a very valuable resource to Patient Access professionals!

# NAHAM Celebrates 40 Years of Access Leadership

Attendees at NAHAM conferences develop their knowledge of key issues and trends that will make their hospitals more effective and efficient. They also take advantage of multiple networking opportunities. We hope NAHAM 40th Annual Conference attendees came away with an appreciation for the profession, as well as the history of the association and a glimpse into what the future holds!



We were pleased to offer a selection of Learning Labs presented by guest speakers and patient access services professionals from across the nation. These sessions addressed critical issues in patient access services and taught what you need to know to drive improvements in your department, grow as a professional in your field as well as your network of colleagues, and record the new ideas and innovative processes to share with your staff back home.



Thank you for joining us and for being a part of this vital organization; we've come a long way—from admitting to patient access—and together we will continue to grow as individuals and as an association!



## ***Dates to Remember...***

- **September 17 - 19, 2014**

NCAHAM (North Carolina Association of Healthcare Access Managers) Fall Educational Conference, Carolina Beach, NC

- **September 21 - 24, 2014**

CAHAM (California Association of healthcare Access Management) Fall Conference, Santa Barbara, California

- **October 16 - 17, 2014**

NW Regional Fall Conference: Hosted by GNHAMA & WHAMA, Troutdale, OR

- **October 21 - 22, 2014**

10th Annual NEHAM Education Conference, Mahwah, NJ

- **October 23 - 24, 2014**

IAHAA (Iowa Admitting & Healthcare Access Association) Fall Education Conference, Des Moines, IA

*Have a special date you want to see in CertAlert?*

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

It's  
Coming.  
#ClubNAHAM15

**41st Annual Educational Conference & Exposition**

**April 19 - 22, 2015**

**JW Marriott • Indianapolis, Indiana**