

## Rebranding the AHDI Credentialing Exams Frequently Asked Questions

as of June 11, 2013

### 1. What are the new AHDI Exam Designations?

The new designations are *Registered Healthcare Documentation Specialist (RHDS)* and *Certified Healthcare Documentation Specialist (CHDS)*. These designations will be awarded to all candidates who have passed or will pass AHDI's current credentialing exams for both level 1 and level 2 healthcare documentation professionals. The current exam blue prints, which were updated in 2010, were designed to assess an expanded healthcare documentation skill set, including: *advanced editing, regulatory compliance and technical standards, applied clinical medicine, computers/information systems, speech recognition, and health information technology*. These knowledge domains were not evaluated on previous iterations of the AHDI RMT and CMT exam blue prints and therefore represent an augmented skill set for medical transcriptionists. RMTs and CMTs who earned their designations under these expanded blue prints will transition automatically to the new RHDS and CHDS designations. All other RMTs and CMTs will have to demonstrate competency against the additional blue print objectives to upgrade to the new designations or retain their current credentials.

### 2. What will happen to the RMT and CMT credentials?

The RHDS and CHDS will be the only credentials offered by examination via AHDI. Candidates for those credentials will follow the same qualifications process for examination that is already in place. Level 1 candidates will sit for the *Registered Healthcare Documentation Specialist (RHDS)* exam. Candidates with a valid RHDS credential will be qualified to sit for the *Certified Healthcare Documentation Specialist (CHDS)* exam. Like the RMT, the RHDS will continue to be a prerequisite to sit for the CHDS exam. Even though the RHDS and CHDS designations will be the only credentials offered by examination, AHDI will continue to support the recredentialing needs of CMTs who do not wish to transition to the new designations. RMTs will transition automatically to the RHDS designation through a revised recredentialing course.

### 3. What if I earned my RMT or CMT under an older exam?

If you earned your RMT or CMT under an older exam (or you were grandfathered into your CMT at the onset of AAMT's credentialing program), you earned your designation based on a blue print that was limited to a traditional medical transcription skill set; you were not tested under the new knowledge domains as listed above. To earn the RHDS or CHDS, you will need to demonstrate competency under these additional knowledge domains.

### 4. How can I earn the RHDS or CHDS?

There are three ways to earn the RHDS and CHDS credentials:

- *If you earned your RMT or CMT under the current exam blue prints:* Receive an automatic change of your RMT to RHDS or CMT to CHDS. A new certificate will be mailed to you along with information about your new designation. Upon receipt of your new certificate, you may begin using the RHDS or CHDS right away.
- *If you earned your CMT under an old exam blue print:* Complete the *CHDS Bridge Course* to earn the CHDS designation. The course provides both content review and evaluation of the expanded blue print objectives and knowledge domains to ensure that you are able to demonstrate the same knowledge domain competencies. Successful completion of the course is required to earn the CHDS and is the only means for transitioning to these credentials without examination under the current blue prints.
- *If you earned your RMT under an old exam blue print:* Complete the revised RHDS Recredentialing Course to earn the RHDS designation. The course is being updated to include the additional blue print domains, so that RMTs will automatically bridge to the RHDS through the recredentialing course. RMTs will have the option to take this course at any time during their current cycle or wait until end of cycle. Successful completion of the recredentialing course, regardless when taken, will trigger the start of a new cycle.
- *If you have never earned an AHDI credential:* Level 1 candidates will sit for the *Registered Healthcare Documentation Specialist (RHDS)* exam. Candidates with a valid RHDS credential will be qualified to sit for the *Certified Healthcare Documentation Specialist (CHDS)* exam.

#### Do I have to transition from my current CMT credential?

No, unless you credentialed under the current exam blue prints as detailed in #4. Many healthcare documentation specialists who are working in traditional transcription roles may opt to keep their transcription-specific credentials and find them more professionally meaningful than the new designations. At whatever point the professional environment of an MT demands these new skills or an MT wants to augment their professional resume with these additional competencies, the CMT can opt to transition to the new designations by bridge course or examination.

#### Have the exam blue prints changed with the release of the RHDS and CHDS?

No, the exam blue prints have not been modified. Only the *designations* earned through the current exams have changed. The blue prints, exam fees, qualifications, cut scores, and notifications have not changed.

#### How will I recredential as an RHDS and CHDS?

The current recredentialing policies, procedures, and CEC assignment categories will continue to apply under this new program. An RHDS will recredential by course at end of cycle. An RHDS recredentialing course will be offered

to those who want to retain their “registry” credentials at the end of their 3-year term. A CHDS will recredential by earning 30 continuing education credits (CECs) in relevant, approved, level-2 content during each 3-year cycle just as CMTs are currently required to do.

**If I decide to keep my CMT, will anything change with my recredentialing cycle or requirements?**

CMTs can continue to recredential by continuing education under the most current recredentialing requirements. In this manner, *AHDI will sunset the CMT credentials over time, as all exam candidates moving forward will credential under the new blue prints. CMTs will either transition to the CHDS or retire their credentials at end of career.*

**Why is AHDI requiring a bridge course for some RMTs and CMTs to earn the new designations?**

Ultimately, the goal is to transition as many of our credentialed professionals to these updated designations as we can. But given the great disparity of competencies currently represented by the RMT and CMT credentials, automatically changing all RMTs and CMTs to the RHDS/CHDS was not a credible option. The CMT credential, for example, currently represents everyone from those who were grandfathered into the CMT in the 1980s to those who passed the original level-1 CMT exam in the 1990s to those who passed the old level-2 exam in the early 2000s and those who passed the new advanced competency level-2 exam launched in 2010. The only way to ensure that all professionals who carry this new CHDS credential represent the same advanced skill set is to establish a competency line and require all potential candidates to cross it. CMTs will not be required to sit for the complete CHDS exam through Kryterion, however. The bridge course is exactly that – a *bridge* between the transcription-only skill set and the expanded healthcare documentation specialist skill set. Likewise, RMTs will need to demonstrate the same blue print competencies as their newly credentialed colleagues and will be required to do that through the revised recredentialing course. An RMT will need to complete the recredentialing course to earn the RHDS credential and *then* move on to the CHDS exam when ready to demonstrate a level-2 competency.

**Does the CHDS mean my CMT is no longer valuable or relevant in the profession?**

Your CMT will continue to represent your level-2 skill set in traditional medical transcription, and that’s how you are encouraged to position that credential on your resume, with your employer, and with future employers. AHDI will be marketing the CHDS as the credential that represents a professional with a broader healthcare documentation skillset – one that includes, but is not limited to, traditional medical transcription. We *want* employers to view this expanded designation as the value-add credential that positions our workforce to fill emerging and future roles in the electronic health record and clinical data management.

**If I earn my CHDS, should I still use my CMT? Are they separate credentials?**

No, your CHDS should replace your CMT, just as an RHIA replaces an RHIT. The CHDS includes all competencies previously implied by your CMT *plus* all the new competency domains tested by the CHDS examination. The same is true of the RHDS, which should replace the RMT designation in your signature and correspondence.

**If I earned my RMT under the old exam, do I have to bridge to the RHDS credential in order to sit for the CHDS exam?**

Yes. The only candidates who will be permitted to sit for the CHDS exam moving forward will be candidates with a valid RHDS credential. So if you have an older RMT, you’ll need to go through the updated recredentialing course *before* registering for the CHDS exam.

**What happens to my current recredentialing cycle if I pass a bridge course and earn my RHDS or CHDS?**

CMTs who wish to take the bridge course can do so at any time during their CEC cycle and your recertification date will not change. Upon successful completion of the bridge course, the CMT will earn the CHDS and receive a new certificate. *The CMT will also earn 10 CECs upon course completion to apply to end-of-cycle recredentialing requirements.* RMTs can take the updated recredentialing course at any time during their 3-year cycle. Upon successful completion of the recredentialing course, the RMT will upgrade to the RHDS, receive a new certificate, and begin a new 3-year cycle. The RHDS will continue to recredential by course just as before.

**What is the content difference between the RMT and the RHDS? What will I gain by bridging to the RHDS?**

The current RMT exam (which will be renamed the RHDS exam) contains **19 objectives** across four knowledge domains that did *not* exist on any previous RMT blue print or RMT exam. These objectives (1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.24, 2.20, 2.28, 2.29, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5) represent advanced editing, regulatory compliance, additional clinical medicine, computer fundamentals, and health information technology content that was built into the RMT blue print at the time of its revision in 2010 in response to AHDI’s 2010 *job task analysis (JTA)*. The JTA revealed that these additional knowledge domains and skill areas were of increasing demand in the healthcare documentation workspace and desired by employers of new graduates. Every person who has earned an RMT under the current blue print has been tested against these new domains, and the AHDI Model Curriculum has recently been updated to reflect this additional content to prepare current and future graduates to take the current test (5th edition released in 2012). If you hold an RMT from an older blue print exam, you will be asked to review and demonstrate competency in these additional knowledge domains as part of the updated recredentialing course, after which you will be able to convey to current and future employers that you have *added* advanced editing, regulatory compliance, technology, etc. to your skillset and your professional designation. **Download the RHDS blue print objectives for Recredentialing Course [here](#).**

**What is the content difference between the CMT and CHDS? What will I gain by bridging to the CHDS?**

The current CMT exam (which will be renamed the CHDS exam) contains **15 objectives** across two knowledge domains that did *not* exist on any previous CMT blue print or CMT exam. These objectives (1.22, 1.23, 1.24, 1.25,

1.26, 1.27, 1.28, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8) represent advanced clinical practice, advanced surgical practice, health information technology and standards, and speech recognition technology content and practical application that was built into the CMT blue print at the time of its revision in 2010 in response to AHDI's 2010 *job task analysis (JTA)*. The JTA revealed that these additional knowledge domains and skill areas were of increasing demand in the healthcare documentation workspace and desired by employers of level 2 acute-care transcriptionists, editors, and QA managers. Every person who has earned a CMT under the current blue print has been tested against these new domains. If you hold a CMT from an older blue print exam, you can opt to retain it *or* take the bridge course to augment your knowledge and skills with these additional blue print domains. You will be able to convey to current and future employers that you have *added* advanced clinical and surgical practice, technology, SRT editing, etc. to your skillset and your professional designation. **Download the CHDS blue print objectives for Bridge Course [here](#).**

**How do I determine if I earned my credential under the new exam blue print or an older exam blue print?**

**Anyone who tested and earned their credential from January 1, 2011, tested under the new exam blue prints and will be transitioned to the new RHDS or CHDS credentials. If you earned your credential by participating in the beta exam in October through December of 2010 through Kryterion's online proctoring you will be transitioned to the new credentials. If you took your exam through Prometric you tested under an older exam blue print and will need to take a course to earn the new credentials.**