**Focus on Recertification**

You have earned your CHAM and/or CHAA Credential and couldn't be more excited—the hard work has paid off! You notify your supervisor and your peers of your accomplishment, and now get to proudly display your lapel pin and certificate to those not only working next to you, but to patients checking in who depend on your services for a quality care experience. There’s just one thing—you have yet to read the detailed letter in your pass packet explaining the steps towards your impending recertification in two years. NAHAM requires those holding the CHAM and CHAA credentials to participate in the Certification Maintenance Program every two years in order to retain their certification.

In all the excitement, new certificant holders often forget that there is an important process to maintaining the CHAM and CHAA credential(s). Fulfilling certification maintenance requirements demonstrates one’s efforts to maintain continued competence in the field of patient access services and the desire to keep a certification credential like the CHAM and the CHAA. NAHAM takes many different steps for quality assurance purposes in the credential program; auditing 10% of our applicant pool for both initial certification and recertification.

Starting in June of 2014, CHAM’s ten (10) of the sixty (60) hours required to maintain the CHAM credential will have to be NAHAM provided continuing education. NAHAM provided hours will include webinars, conference, affiliate participation and holding office, among many other options and can be viewed in its entirety here.

As a credentialing body, NAHAM requires certification maintenance in part because the knowledge and skills required for competent occupational and professional performance change over time. Additionally, because the certification maintenance process encourages certificant holders to remain current in their field, it increases confidence among the public, employers, and other stakeholders.

Our website is available 24/7 and has both CHAM and CHAA pages dedicated to explaining what is required for certification maintenance, how to go about inputting your hours, as well as illustrating what is construed as acceptable documentation. Visit our website today and make sure you are top of the credential you worked so hard to earn!
In Their Own Words:
One Hospital’s Method Of Rewarding CHAA Credentialied Staff

M.D. Anderson

Cancer Center is a large academic healthcare facility consisting of thirty-five outpatient clinics and a 571 bed hospital. Patient access staff are cross trained to perform registration, insurance authorization, and financial counseling functions.

While many facilities were implementing career ladders back in 2010, MD Anderson chose to implement a program that rewarded staff for achieving certain milestones on a yearly basis. A person’s base pay remains the same but they have the ability to earn additional pay known as ‘skills pay’. Much like CHAA recertification, patient access staff must demonstrate continued maintenance in order to continue to receive the additional skills pay.

New staff participate in a formal training program consisting of four weeks of classroom instruction followed by an examination on institutional policies and procedures. Every year patient access staff must meet certain requirements including participation in a customer service class, above average evaluation scores and met two goals set by their supervisor. If they accomplish these, they receive an annual cash payout in addition to their normal salary. Every two years they must retake and pass the institutional examination to ensure that they maintain knowledge of current policies. Failure to pass the exam or to complete the other required elements of the program results in a loss of the additional skills payout.

While it is important to maintain knowledge at the institution you work in, it is equally important to maintain knowledge at the national level. NAHAM’s CHAA exam allowed us to compare skills with others doing similar functions. It validated an individual’s competency in patient access. MD Anderson pays for the CHAA exam and a retake if necessary. Additionally, they pay for recertification. Patient access staff wishing to receive a larger sum of skills pay on a monthly rather than year basis must pass and maintain their CHAA certification in addition to the other institutional requirements.

While the program does not require CHAA certification, it offers individuals an opportunity to achieve additional pay if they choose to show dedication and commitment by obtaining and maintaining their CHAA credentials. Continued certification brings recognition and marketability to staff and ensures that continuing education is maintained to keep up in the CHANGING world of healthcare.

University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center—Houston

PATIENT ACCESS
CELEBRATING THE PAST LEADING INTO THE FUTURE
March 31 — April 6, 2014

NATIONAL PATIENT ACCESS
PERSONNEL WEEK • 2014

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

NAHAM 2025 M Street, NW Washington, DC 20036 (202) 367-1125 info@naham.org
Welcome New Certification Commission Members!

Katie Harwood, CHAM
Patient Access Manager
University of Utah Healthcare
Salt Lake City, UT
Currently a proctor of both CHAA and CHAM examinations within her organization, Katie volunteers on the Mountain West Chapter of NAHAM as a committee member. Trained in managing behaviors and performance, Katie is involved in the implementation of billing systems, and has a deep understanding of how clinical work flows impact prior authorization and financial counseling needs. She is currently working on projects with ACA and qualified health plans in Utah.
Welcome, Katie!

Kerrie West, CHAM, CHAA
Manager, Patient Access & Telecommunications
Bay Medical Center
Sacred Heart Health System
Panama City, FL
Since becoming a NAHAM member in 2011, Kerrie has been assisting and encouraging others to become CHAM and CHAA certified, organizing training in her facility to assist two members of her leadership team to obtain certifications. Kerrie retains both her CHAM and CHAA credential, has served in patient access for nine years, as well as serving the business side of healthcare for twenty-three years. Passionate about ensuring policies and seeing that governmental regulations are followed, Kerrie brings strength to her team every day.
Welcome, Kerrie!

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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 and put them in a single individualized dashboard, available 24/7 for any and all certification-related needs.

**The deadline for the April testing window is February 28th!**

**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 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 your 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/](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.

**Congratulations to the over 3,100 CHAMs and CHAAAs 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 (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.
**Certification Commission Announcement!**

Beginning in 2011, NAHAM raised the number of professional development hours to sixty (60) to be completed within the previous two years in order to maintain your certification. Starting in June 2015, ten (10) of the sixty (60) contact hours must be NAHAM approved contact hours. Specific NAHAM approved contact hours will be added online in mid-2014.

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 years.

**Click. Communicate. Promote.**

Don’t forget to follow NAHAM on all of its media outlets! Follow our Twitter today @MyNAHAM 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 which can be viewed here [http://bit.ly/13hTR6U](http://bit.ly/13hTR6U). Our Facebook and LinkedIn pages promote all things NAHAM and include reminders on certification deadlines, next steps towards maintaining your certification and membership notifications.

*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 by emailing us at info@naham.org or calling 202.367.1125*
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.

CHAM & CHAA Re-takes:

Taking advantage of NAHAM’s Educational Products and Re-take Discount

Taking part in any credentialing program can be daunting; the signing up process, studying, finding a proctor, and sitting for a two hour examination. For those who don’t pass on their initial attempt, it can be extremely disconcerting and frustrating. To placate some of the anxieties that go along with test-taking, NAHAM offers an array of educational products to help with every learning style:

CHAA Online Certification Preparation Course – an internet based program designed to help you assess your knowledge of the CHAA exam content and identify areas in which additional study is necessary before you take the exam.

• Learn about the CHAA examination
• Assess what you already know
• Discover your weak areas
• Learn successful test-taking strategies
• Develop a study plan that will help you prepare for the examination.

In addition, the CHAA certification Preparation course comes with access to:

• NAHAM Access Management Glossary
• CHAA Certification Preparation Course Participant Guide
• MSP Fact Sheet
• Over 100 Multiple choice practice questions throughout the course

CHAM Assessment Indicator – review a list of topics that will be covered on the exam and test your ability to demonstrate proficiency by answering a series of questions via a brief survey.

CHAM & CHAA Study Guide – reviews key information related to the various functions of patient access services throughout the access continuum. Features of the study guide include:

• CHAM Examination Content Outline
• Sample test questions
• A glossary of terms

E-Learn Associate™ and E-Learn Manager™ - interactive study aids complete with narrated instruction, activities, downloadable materials, and online quizzes.

All of these products are available on the NAHAM website and available for order at any time. Please visit our Certification Examination Preparation page for more details on the products above.

Get Familiar With: CHAM/CHAA Re-take Procedure

If you do not pass the examination on your initial attempt, you may re-take the examination at the discounted fee in the next consecutive testing window (please reference the CHAM/CHAA Landing Page for testing windows and deadlines). You may re-take the exam as many times as you would like, however, the discounted re-take fee only applies if you have previously paid the full amount.

At the end of each testing window, NAHAM will send out an email with the discount voucher code to all those that qualify. Please log-in to your dashboard on Certification Central and create a new application, the discount code will be applied at the end of the application.

You may pay online with a credit card right away, or you may select “Submit without Payment” and send a check at a later date. If you would like to pay by credit card after the testing window deadline has closed, you must request an invoice from NAHAM, as nothing will be automatically sent.

NAHAM Audits 10% of all its applicants for quality assurance purposes. Please reference the eligibility requirements in the Candidate Guide to Certification for additional audit information.
**CHAM Spotlight:**

**Lynn Arrington, CHAM, CHAA**

Manager, Patient Access Services

Texas Health Resources

Arlington, Texas

CHAM since April 24, 2008

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What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?
The organization that I am currently employed likes to honor their employees who are CHAA/CHAM. This is something that I wanted to achieve and have leaders in the Organization proud that they had another CHAM associate.

What is the most rewarding aspect of having the CHAM?
Knowing that I took that extra step as a Manager to become certified.

Would you recommend NAHAM to others?
I would recommend this to other who are looking to become a certified Manager with the NAHAM association.

How does certification distinguish you from other patient access healthcare professionals?
It validates you as a Manager.

Was earning a credential in healthcare something you aspired for?
It was not something that I set my sights on however after attending conferences and becoming familiar with NAHAM it was something that I wanted to do to show my affiliation with NAHAM to the outside world.

What were your reasons for seeking certification?
I wanted to be nationally recognized as a Manager and a member of NAHAM.

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What did you expect the certification process to be like?
The process was easier than expected. It was very simple to sign up and register online and to download the study guide was easy.

What have been the rewards of earning your credential?
I can now be recognized as a CHAM and know that I can inspire other to obtain their certification.

What advice would you give those seeking to earn their credential?
I would recommend learning every aspect of the Patient Access and Revenue Cycle Department. From the first scheduled event to the final bill it is important to know how each department intertwines to provide information as well as a great customer experience.

What does your hospital’s executive management think of your earning of the CHAM credential?
They are extremely proud of me and hope that I will inspire and encourage other to set their sights on achieving this as well.
CHAA Spotlight:

Cynthia Ontiveros, CHAA
Patient Financial Advocate
The University of Utah Medical Center
Salt Lake City, Utah
CHAA since October 26, 2012

What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?

The University Of Utah Health Care has a mission to serve the people of Utah and beyond by improving individual and community health. I felt the best way I could contribute to this mission was to obtain more knowledge of my patient access duties.

Was earning a credential in healthcare something you aspired to?

At first, no; however having the credential in healthcare has helped me become more confident in my position and helps me assist the hospital in their mission.

Would you recommend NAHAM Credentialing program to others?

Absolutely! Obtaining this certification shows you recognize the importance of Patient Access roles.

What were your reasons for seeking certification?

To increase my knowledge of the patient access aspect of the healthcare system.

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

I believe that having the credential makes you more marketable as it shows commitment to your profession and professional growth.

What have been the rewards of earning your credential?

I think the ultimate reward is helping our patients. Having the CHAA certification gives patient access employee the tools and confidence to put the patient first in assisting in the excellent patient care experience.

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

JUST DO IT!
Facility Spotlight:

The Medical Center of Central Georgia

Macon, Georgia

Over 100 Certified CHAM & CHAA Individuals

The Medical Center of Central Georgia is a designated Level I Trauma Center and one of 42 twice-designated Magnet® hospitals for nursing excellence nationwide. It provides a broad range of community-based, outpatient diagnostic, primary care, extensive home health and hospice care, and comprehensive cancer and rehabilitation services. Distinguished nationally for its excellence, MCCG is also one of the premier teaching hospitals in the United States and serves as the primary teaching hospital for the Mercer University School of Medicine. MCCG supports residency-training programs in family practice, general surgery, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology and pediatrics. The hospital has more than 100 medical residents and fellows in training. As a teaching hospital, MCCG is able to attract the best and the brightest to the area.

What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?
NAHAM offers staff and management certifications that enhance the skills of our employees by assisting them to become more effective in their roles. The fact that NAHAM provided a front line and management certification separately was appealing to us as we grow our staff. The certifications are also very relevant to the Patient Access Associate by addressing competency in those areas where Patient Access Associates operate routinely.

What aspect of working with NAHAM have you enjoyed the most?
NAHAM provides cutting edge and up to date education for Patient Access resources. The convenience of the resources is fabulous—once you go to the NAHAM homepage, everything is right there at your fingertips.

What are the benefits to your employees?
The employees are more knowledgeable with the processes of Patient Access and how what they do every day impacts the Revenue Cycle and the organization. Certification allows the employee on a path toward professional growth to certify and solidify their knowledge. It also identifies them to others in the industry as a knowledgeable professional. Obtaining their certification gives the staff a morale booster and challenges those who are not CHAA Certified, to obtain their certification. Knowledge is Power, the more you know, the better positioned you will be for the future.

How is the patient access healthcare profession changing?
No longer is Patient Access just the department that “gets the patient in the computer”. We are a critical component to the patient experience. We are more patient-centered and customer oriented. We not only service the patient, but we support other service line professionals by providing high quality service in registration and all of its support areas. We are the first face of the facility whether on the phone or in person. We must be sure to make a GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION as we are the LINK between the patient, physician office, facility and insurance company. More is expected of the Patient Access professional as they critically think and provide excellence in their position.

What benefits does certification bring to your hospital?
The 3 Operational Lenses here at our facility are Strategy, Operations and People with one of the most important being Our People. People includes our patients, family members, physicians, co-workers or anyone we come in contact with. One of the benefits of certification is the recognition of the individual achievement of the employee. These employees were committed to excellence and achieved their certification. The knowledge that comes with an employee who achieves certification translates to a better experience in all interactions. These certifications are a vehicle to differentiate yourself from competitors.

Do you believe having credentials will help employees adjust to changes in healthcare?
Yes. Generations are changing so therefore healthcare will change. The new generation are so technical, you would think that when their mothers were carrying them, they had smartphones. With the change in the generations, new requirements, new potential and credentials comes. As with any one person or generation, achieving any certification empowers you and makes you have an internal sense of pride and satisfaction.

How do you believe having credentialed professionals will benefit your hospital?
Certification validates a higher level of knowledge for the employee allowing them to excel in their profession. The more confident they feel, the better positioned they are to carry out the duties of their position. This confidence also increases their ability to be more effective and efficient.

Additional comments:
NAHAM is a wonderful institution and I appreciate all that you offer for employees throughout the healthcare industry.
Dates to Remember...

- **February 28, 2014**  
  Deadline to sign-up for the examinations in the April testing window.

- **March 21, 2014**  
  aIPAM Spring Conference, Schaumburg, IL

- **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!*

- **September 21,-24, 2014**  
  CAHAM 46th Annual Educational Conference, Santa Barbara, CA

- **October 16 - 17, 2014**  
  NW Regional Fall Conference: Hosted by GNHAMA & WHAMA, Troutdale, OR

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

From Admitting to Patient Access: 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