Q: Why is there a certification maintenance requirement for the CHAM and the CHAA?

A: The Certification Maintenance program upholds the objectives of NAHAM’s credential program and our vision to promote lifelong learning. Certification Maintenance strengthens the value of certification and demonstrates your ongoing commitment to excellence in the patient access services profession. Fulfilling certification maintenance requirements is one way of demonstrating your efforts to maintain continuing competence in the field and your desire to keep your certification.

2011 CHAA & CHAM Certification Maintenance

The Who, What, When, and Where

CHAA Certification Maintenance

Certified Healthcare Access Associates who earned their certification in an odd-numbered year (2005, 2007, 2009, etc.) are due to recertify in 2011. You will be required to submit your certification maintenance application between April 1 and April 30, 2011.

On the application you must declare that you have completed a minimum of 30 hours of continuing education earned between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2011. CHAAs also will need verification from a supervisor that they have worked at least 1,500 hours in a position relevant to patient access services between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2011.

The CHAA certification maintenance fee is $25. Fulfilling certification maintenance requirements extends the valid date of your CHAA credential through March 31, 2013.

See Page 2 for information on how and where to track contact hours!

CHAM Certification Maintenance

Certified Healthcare Access Managers who earned their certification prior to May 31, 2010 are due to recertify in 2011. You will be required to submit your certification maintenance documentation between June 1 and June 30, 2011. This documentation includes verification that you have completed the necessary continuing education contact hours.

For those who earned their CHAM prior to May 31, 2009: Report a minimum of 60 hours of continuing education earned between June 1, 2009 and May 31, 2011.

For those who earned their CHAM between June 1, 2009 and May 31, 2010: Report a minimum of 30 hours of continuing education earned between June 1, 2009 and May 31, 2011.

Those who earned the CHAM after May 31, 2010 do not renew until June 2013.

The CHAM certification maintenance fee is $50 for NAHAM members and $75 for non-members. Fulfilling your certification maintenance requirements extends the valid date of your CHAM credential through May 31, 2013.
Tracking Your Contact Hours

What are contact hours?
A contact hour is a unit of measurement associated with educational activities. NAHAM defines a contact hour as one clock hour (60 minutes) of a valid educational activity.

What counts as a contact hour?
As an additional resource, NAHAM has compiled examples of activities that count as contact hours.

Both CHAAs and CHAMs may reference the contact hour guide, available here:

Once you understand what counts as a valid contact hour, you must track them to ensure that you meet the certification maintenance requirements detailed on Page 1.

How do I track contact hours?
In order to make this process simple, NAHAM has developed an interactive Contact Hour Tracking Tool.

This spreadsheet includes instructions, examples of tracked contact hours, and a template for you to track your own educational and professional development activities.

Simply click here and navigate through the worksheets (there are three total, located on tabs at the bottom of the spreadsheet).

Contact Hour Opportunities

In addition to your facility’s inservice trainings and other education opportunities, NAHAM provides many top-notch educational activities valid towards certification maintenance. These include:

NAHAM Web Seminars
NAHAM offers live and on-demand virtual learning opportunities through our Web Seminar program; click here to learn more.

NAHAM 37th Annual Educational Conference & Exposition
Coming to San Antonio in 2011, the NAHAM Conference will provide up to 23 contact hours to attendees who take part in a wide array of activities including Learning Labs, the Access Solutions Marketplace, Industry-Sponsored Symposia, and special pre-conference Symposia. Visit www.naham.org/conference

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CHAA Spotlight:

Katherine Vargas, CHAA
Financial Counselor
Christus Santa Rosa
San Antonio, Texas

CHAA since April 17, 2009

What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?
Our hospital has us take certain tests on Healthstream and once we passed all these tests we were given the opportunity to get certified by NAHAM; I took the opportunity and succeeded.

What is the most rewarding aspect of having the CHAA?
It shows that you are the best of the best and have accomplished becoming recognized as a leader in Healthcare by being certified. And it looks good on resumes.

Was earning a credential in healthcare something you aspired to?
Yes, because I wanted to show I could reach the goal I had set forth to accomplish for myself and my career.

What’s your favorite thing to do outside of work?
I love to spend time with my family.

If you weren’t in the healthcare field, what would be your next career?
My next career choice would be to work in a school setting such as in administration.

Would you recommend NAHAM to others? Specifically earning a credential through NAHAM?
Yes, I would. It is a great challenge and accomplishment.
CHAM Spotlight:

Luis Picardo, CHAM
Manager of Revenue Cycle Education & QA
Denver Health Medical Center
Denver, Colorado

CHAM since January 22, 2010

What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?

When I was given responsibility over the Revenue Cycle Education function, I decided to lead an initiative to motivate registration staff to obtain the CHAA certification. The next logical step was for me to become certified first to be able to provide adequate guidance. I introduced the initiative at our Patient Registration Leadership Forum which was favorably received by the group. For the past two years, I have conducted quarterly CHAA orientations for those who are interested in learning more about this certification. I also conduct study groups for those who apply for it and help them prepare for the exam. Some supervisors were interested in obtaining the CHAM certification which in turn motivated me to obtain it first so I could proctor them.

What is the most rewarding aspect of having the CHAM?

Overall, it provides a sense of achievement. This is a nationally recognized certification that implies, for those who possess it, a level of experience and mastery of Patient Access functions. Also, I can set a motivational example for others to pursue it.

Would you recommend NAHAM to others? Specifically earning a credential through NAHAM?

I am always encouraging registrars throughout the agency to obtain the CHAA certification. At Denver Health Medical Center, we have a system in place that allows registration staff to be reimbursed for the examination fee upon successful completion of the exam. Through the promotion of this credentialing program, we have even had a few staff members from other departments (outside of patient access) participate and become CHAA certified. To date, forty-two of our employees hold this certification.

Was earning a credential in healthcare something you aspired to?

I take advantage of any opportunity to increase my knowledge and resource base to assist me in becoming more proficient in my functions; being involved in proctoring and educating staff to obtain the credentials offered by NAHAM has been a great aid in this endeavor.

If you weren’t in the healthcare field, what would be your next career choice?

I enjoy languages and cultures. My next career choice would be teaching Spanish at a college level.

Q: What is a valid educational activity?

A: A valid educational activity is one:

- where the certificate holder is the learner;
- that is directly or indirectly related to the practice of patient access services;
- that results in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, or the enhancement of current knowledge and skills;
- where the certificate holder is responsible for determining that the professional development activity is appropriate, relevant, and meaningful to patient access services.
- in which the certificate holder’s attendance can be documented by a third party such as an employer, educational institution, or sponsoring organization.

NAHAM       2025 M Street, NW    Washington, DC 20036  (202) 367-1125       info@naham.org
Facility Spotlight:

M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

Houston, Texas

M.D. Anderson Cancer Center is a large academic healthcare facility consisting of approximately 35 outpatient clinics and a 571 bed hospital. There are over 300 patient access staff devoted to new patient referral, registration, insurance authorization, financial counseling and indigent care processing. A patient access skills program was implemented in September 2010. This program is designed to provide growth opportunities within the field of patient access and to recognize individuals for their knowledge.

What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?

In addition to meeting goals, participating in PI projects, and completing customer service classes, staff must complete two competency exams. One exam is based on specific computer screens and policies at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center and the other is the CHAA or CHAM certification. Because NAHAM offered a credentialing program that focused directly on Patient Access functions, it was selected and incorporated into M.D. Anderson’s Skills Program.

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

NAHAM provided the opportunity to test knowledge at a national level and compare skills with others doing similar functions. It is easy to register for the examination. The examination is offered online and provides immediate results. Offering it four different months a year provides flexibility in scheduling and allows individuals time to prepare for the examination. The content outline and study guide provide direction for studying. Allowing our educators to proctor the examination is another advantage that prevents travel off-site and expense to the institution and the staff.

What are the benefits to your employees?

Certification brings recognition and marketability to staff. It validates that an individual has demonstrated competency and is dedicated to a ‘career’ in patient access.

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

M.D. Anderson does not have plans to require credentialing, however it does offer up to an additional $1,200 per year to those that are certified and meet the other minimum requirements of the skills program. M.D. Anderson has chosen to pay for certification and for re-certification because of the value it sees in hiring and retaining credentialled staff.

NAHAM thanks Patient Access Education Coordinators at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center Von Fields, CHAM, Barbara Richards, CHAM, and Eileen McFadden, CHAA for their contributions to this.
Important Dates

• November 30, 2010
  Application deadline for January, 2011 examination period

• February 28, 2011
  Application deadline for April, 2011 examination period

• March 31, 2011
  All Certified Healthcare Access Associates due to renew their certification in 2011 need to have all
  requirements met by this day. View Page 1 for requirements

• April 1 - April 30, 2011
  All Certified Healthcare Access Associates who are renewing their certification must file their
  maintenance paperwork between April 1 and April 20, 2011

• May 24 - 27, 2011
  NAHAM’s 37th Annual Educational Conference & Exposition (www.naham.org/conference).
  *Earn up to 23 contact hours*

• May 31, 2011
  All Certified Healthcare Access Managers due to recertify in 2011 need to have all requirements met
  by this day. View Page 1 for requirements.

• June 1 - June 30, 2011
  All Certified Healthcare Access Managers who are renewing their certification must file their
  maintenance paperwork between June 1 and June 30, 2011