NAHAM hosts the only conference exclusively focused on the education and networking needs of patient access professionals—members and non-members alike. The NAHAM website contains everything you need to know about this event, from a full conference schedule and program to a Justification Toolkit that helps you quantify your return on investment of attending this event.

Learn more and register today by visiting www.naham.org/conference.

NAHAM brings its Annual Educational Conference & Exposition to sunny San Diego, California May 8 – 11 and we’re hoping you’ll be there too! NAHAM’s conference is not only a great way to connect and learn with other experts in patient access, but also to earn contact hours through educational seminars and keynote speakers in an interactive and exciting way.

From NAHAM University, our Customer Service Symposium, exceptional keynote speakers and twenty-five Learning Lab sessions, you will learn the latest information about the topics important to you to help you drive improved performance in your own facility.

Together with your peers, you will be able to engage in lively, dynamic discussions on a wide-range of topics. While attending these valuable sessions, you will also accrue valuable contact hours valid towards eligibility for or maintenance of your NAHAM professional credential. During the breaks, interact with others in the exclusive CHAM lounge! Socialize with fellow credentialed professionals and discuss the value of getting all of your staff members credentialed.

Are you not certified through NAHAM? Do you want to be? No problem! NAHAM offers the paper version of the CHAM & CHAA examinations at our annual conference. For those who prefer to test on paper, this is the only place to do it. Log on to www.naham.org/certification for more information on applying for the examination and registering by the April 15th deadline.
FACTS:

- The NAHAM Educational Conference and Exposition has everything you need to maximize your return on your investment: education, networking, growth and discovery, recharging your professional batteries and much more.

- Convenience: all conference events are held in the Manchester Grand Hyatt (at our special attendee rate of $195 per night including Internet access in your hotel room), and there are multiple dining options to enjoy in the hotel and next door at the quaint Seaport Village.

- Two dynamic keynote speakers—Ian Morrison and Joe Tye—bring their topical healthcare-related sessions to attendees, along with the 25 learning labs on a range of timely and important topics essential to patient access services.

FUN:

- San Diego is a great tourist destination and a wonderful place to bring the whole family. The Manchester Grand Hyatt is located right on San Diego Bay and offers a spectacular waterfront setting with shopping, dining, and entertainment venues.

- The hotel is just three miles from San Diego International Airport and centrally located with accessible access to all area attractions such as SeaWorld, San Diego Zoo, Seaport Village, Balboa Park, The Midway Museum and the Gaslamp Quarter. Make plans to bring your family and combine the 38th NAHAM Annual Educational Conference & Exposition with an exciting vacation.
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 been able to completely personalize all aspects of holding a credential through NAHAM.

April is the first maintenance cycle to be managed through the new module (CHAA Certification Maintenance) and we want to make sure you have all the necessary information to maintain your certification. Please remember, you may begin uploading your contact hours into your dashboard as soon as you would like after passing the examination; however, you may only enter your maintenance payment between April 1 and April 30.

Quick Facts:

- Minimum 30 (thirty) contact hours are required
- Certification Maintenance for CHAAs is $25.
- CHAA certified Associate Members of NAHAM are waived from paying the fee but must report their continuing education activities.
- NAHAM accepts credit cards or personalized check/e-check.
- Organizations may still pay with group checks if they so choose.
- You will need to keep hard copies of everything in case of an audit.
- You will be participating in this year’s certification maintenance cycle if you earned or renewed your credential in 2010 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; for example, CHAA’s may begin to submit their applications on April 1st of the maintenance year.

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

Reference NAHAM’s Guide to Contact Hours for examples of professional development activities. These are the types of qualifying activities one should participate in over the years in order to obtain the necessary amount of hours to maintain CHAA certification. Understand that you may claim other activities which are not listed. The Guide to Contact Hours is a reference to help you to understand the types of activities you should participate in on an ongoing basis to stay up to date in your field.
CHAA Spotlight:

Joshua Varnum, BA, CHAA
Patient Access Training Coordinator
Carolinas Healthcare System
Charlotte, North Carolina
CHAA since October 18, 2011

What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?
I’m a person who strongly believes in self-improvement. The CHAA presented a challenge to me that I was ready and willing to take on. Every week I see my new hires taking on a new challenge in their lives. I think that keeps me motivated to do the same thing in my life.

What is the most rewarding aspect of having the CHAA?
It’s nice to know that the CHAA is a national certification. Being recognized on that level alone is a reward. But the respect I get from my students and coworkers is probably the greatest reward.

Would you recommend NAHAM Credentialing program to others?
Absolutely, I tell everyone on our team to do it. I always ask them the question, “Why wouldn’t you want to better yourself and move up?”

Was earning a credential in healthcare something you aspired to?
At first, no; but after seeing how having these credentials will greatly help me in the future, I decided that it was the right step to take. Once again, I even had to ask myself “why not?”

What were your reasons for seeking certification?
As the Corporate Patient Access Training Coordinator, I felt like the extra credentials would help me in my role of leading the new hires in their careers. The additional information and confidence I gained from the process has already paid off in answering some of the most random questions in classes.

How does certification distinguish you from other patient access healthcare professionals?
I don’t think it really sets me apart from anyone else on our team. We are extremely team oriented and help each other out as much as possible. However, with the experience and knowledge gained, I do feel like they come to me more for advice and answers.

What did you expect the certification process to be like?
It pretty much met my expectations. I learned some new things and reinforced the topics I already knew. It was a great way for me to refresh and update. It’s one thing to study for a test, but it’s so different if the material is something you use every week, and I do.

Was the NAHAM Certification process what you expected?
Sure; there weren’t really any surprises, good or bad.

What have been the rewards of earning your credential?
Aside from the respect and congratulations from my teammates, I think the ultimate reward is knowing that everywhere in the country we’re all doing the same thing, putting the patient first. The topics in the CHAA really show how no matter what hospital or state we work in; we’re all in this together.

What does your hospital’s executive management think of your earning of the CHAA Credential?
They think it’s great. I think they approve of the fact that their trainer is certified. It’s probably comforting to know that their new hire’s first encounter with our staff is a CHAA certified employee.

What advice would you give those seeking to earn their credential?
Quite simply: do it. There shouldn’t be a reason not to. It can only help you.
CHAM Spotlight:

LaKesha Burton, MBA, CHAM
Revenue Integrity Specialist
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
Little Rock, Arkansas
CHAM since September 21, 2005

What drew you to the NAHAM credential program? The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has a magnificent Patient Access training program. It was through this training that I was introduced to NAHAM and the certification program. To know that there was a certification designed to show my organization and others that I understood and could perform my Patient Access duties on a national level was an awesome challenge for me to pursue.

What is the most rewarding aspect of having the CHAM? The most rewarding aspect is being able inform others about NAHAM and the certification program, motivating them to acquire their certifications. When I serve as a proctor for the exam each quarter, I love to see the excitement in the faces of the individuals who pass. It is awesome!

Would you recommend NAHAM to others? Yes, and I recommend taking the CHAA and/or the CHAM in every Patient Access training class that I facilitate! Attaining this certification shows your organization that you recognize the importance of Patient Access and that you are dedicated to doing a good job.

How does certification distinguish you from other patient access healthcare professionals? My CHAM distinguishes me from other patient access professionals because it says that I take pride in my job, that I have the knowledge and skills needed to manage Patient Access delivery not only at the organization I work in now, but at any organization!

Was the NAHAM Certification process what you expected? Acquiring the CHAA was everything I expected. Acquiring the CHAM was a huge challenge, I wasn’t a manager and there were lots of things I did not know or understand. Thru this process I learned a lot about my organization and the world of Patient Access.

What have been the rewards of earning your credential? Earning my credentials rejuvenated my confidence that I have chosen the right field in Patient Access. I recognize and value the importance of the job I have been selected to do, and believe that my knowledge in Patient Access will lead to great things for my career, and the organization I work for.

What advice would you give those seeking to earn their credential? Take the CHAA first! It serves as a precursor to let you see what the CHAM will be like. Not saying that the exams questions are similar, but it just gives you a feel for how the questions are worded and the exam process. The CHAM is not an easy test; you cannot expect to skim materials provided and pass. You must study and study hard and passing will be one of the greatest things you ever do for yourself and your career in Patient Access.

What does your hospital’s executive management think of your earning of the CHAM credential? Our hospital values all of its Patient Access employees! They provide us with the training we need to perform our jobs and also permit us to attain the certifications. Some departments will even pay for the exam, as long as you meet certain criteria. When I took the exam, acquiring the credential was only encouraged, but since then it has become a requirement for the position. This says that our hospital’s executive management recognizes the value of having Certified Patient Access Associates (CHAA) and Certified Patient Access Managers (CHAM) within the organization.

Would you recommend NAHAM to others? Yes, and I recommend taking the CHAA and/or the CHAM in every Patient Access training class that I facilitate! Attaining this certification shows your organization that you recognize the importance of Patient Access and that you are dedicated to doing a good job.

How does certification distinguish you from other patient access healthcare professionals? My CHAM distinguishes me from other patient access professionals because it says that I take pride in my job, that I have the knowledge and skills needed to manage Patient Access delivery not only at the organization I work in now, but at any organization!

Was the NAHAM Certification process what you expected? Acquiring the CHAA was everything I expected. Acquiring the CHAM was a huge challenge, I wasn’t a manager and there were lots of things I did not know or understand. Thru this process I learned a lot about my organization and the world of Patient Access.

What have been the rewards of earning your credential? Earning my credentials rejuvenated my confidence that I have chosen the right field in Patient Access. I recognize and value the importance of the job I have been selected to do, and believe that my knowledge in Patient Access will lead to great things for my career, and the organization I work for.

What advice would you give those seeking to earn their credential? Take the CHAA first! It serves as a precursor to let you see what the CHAM will be like. Not saying that the exams questions are similar, but it just gives you a feel for how the questions are worded and the exam process. The CHAM is not an easy test; you cannot expect to skim materials provided and pass. You must study and study hard and passing will be one of the greatest things you ever do for yourself and your career in Patient Access.

What does your hospital’s executive management think of your earning of the CHAM credential? Our hospital values all of its Patient Access employees! They provide us with the training we need to perform our jobs and also permit us to attain the certifications. Some departments will even pay for the exam, as long as you meet certain criteria. When I took the exam, acquiring the credential was only encouraged, but since then it has become a requirement for the position. This says that our hospital’s executive management recognizes the value of having Certified Patient Access Associates (CHAA) and Certified Patient Access Managers (CHAM) within the organization.
Facility Spotlight:

The MetroHealth System

Cleveland, OH

Over 90 Certified CHAM & CHAA Individuals

The MetroHealth System is one of the largest, most comprehensive health care providers in Northeast Ohio, serving the medical needs of the Greater Cleveland community since 1837. We are committed to responding to community needs, improving the health status of our region, and controlling health care costs. We hold as a core value the provision of services to any resident of Cuyahoga County, regardless of ability to pay.

Special thanks to Phyllis A. Cleary, CHAM, Director, Patient Access & Eligibility Services & Louise Skiba, CRCR, CHAA for their contribution to this article. Please visit www.metrohealth.org for more information!

How is the patient access healthcare profession changing?
As the healthcare industry continues to be more cost conscience, it is critical the patient access team obtains accurate information, verifies information timely, and obtains authorization to reduce downstream costs that involve reworking claims and reducing denials relating to registration, eligibility and authorization.

Do you see credentialing as being mandatory for hospital patient access workers in the future?
I believe successful health systems will require credentialed hospital patient access workers which will directly contribute to the financial success of the hospital and will contribute to the overall positive patient experience.

What benefits does certification bring to your hospital?
Having credentialed professionals ensures we have the most qualified, talented, knowledgeable, and committed employees that will assist us in achieving our Revenue Cycle strategic initiatives and goals.

Do you believe having credentials will help employees adjust to changes in healthcare?
Having credentialed employees encourages them to continue their education and learning in the Patient Access field which increases their professional knowledge and places them ahead of their non-certified peers.

What drew you to the NAHAM credential program?
Our Revenue Cycle Leadership supported, encouraged and recognized the importance of the NAHAM credential program. All managers within the Revenue Cycle contributed to the success of the NAHAM credential program by developing and providing the classroom education for all areas of the Revenue Cycle for the staff. This education was provided during working hours.

What aspect of working with NAHAM have you enjoyed the most?
The NAHAM administrative team was very supportive in assisting us during the entire process including the registration of the Patient Access employees, certification of the proctor, scheduling exam time and proving timely results and certificates.

What are the benefits to your employees?
The employees who have achieved CHAA & CHAM certification are recognized for their knowledge, commitment and drive necessary to continue to perform at standards set by their industry. They are more marketable in their fields and are seen as committed to excellence.

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...

- **March 31, 2012**
  All Certified Healthcare Access Associates due to renew their certification in 2012 need to have all requirements met by this day. View page 1 for requirements.

- **April 1 - April 30, 2012 — Full Testing & Certification Maintenance Period!**
  All Certified Healthcare Access Associates who are renewing their certification must file their certification maintenance paperwork between April 1 and April 30, 2012. Second full test administration period of 2012.

- **April 1 -7**
  Support “Access Week”, by showing your access team that you appreciate their hard work and encourage their efforts as goodwill ambassadors for the entire hospital!

- **April 15, 2012**
  Deadline to register for the CHAM & CHAA written examination at NAHAM’s 2012 Annual Conference

- **May 1, 2012**
  Those who failed to submit their CHAA certification maintenance by the April 30 deadline may participate in the Retroactive Maintenance Program.

- **May 8-11, 2012**
  NAHAM’s 38th Annual Educational Conference & Exposition, San Diego, CA