

HAWKEYE HIGHLIGHTS



Fall 2010

Presidents Message



Pam Brindley, AAHAM President
Iowa Hawkeye Chapter

Greetings Iowa AAHAM Member:

Last spring's conference was a great success with much knowledge shared and fun times had by all. I am looking forward to the fall conference which will once again be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Urbandale.

Currently I am on the AAHAM National Communications Committee. Our focus has been to get all AAHAM chapters and members involved in joining and participating in LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. To spur this on at the state level, I have been discussing with Kiel some options that would make LinkedIn a valuable resource for our Hawkeye AAHAM Chapter members.

In establishing a Hawkeye AAHAM Chapter LinkedIn membership, one goal would be to make this site a resource for providers by posting weekly news stories or educational information. It would be vital to keep this information current so that it does not get dated and stale. That way, more people would utilize the site.

In keeping members involved, Kiel suggested that we promote members to Moderators and Managers in order to introduce potential new Board and Committee candidates as to how we operate. Another method to reach out to everyone at a moment's notice would be to create Sub Groups for Certification, Corporate Sponsorship, etc. This would help bypass spam filters.

LinkedIn could also be utilized to attract more corporate sponsors in different Verticals.

Let me know what you think about this and if you are not already a member of the group or linked in, use this as an excuse to do so!

Once again I am looking forward to the fall conference, but I am sad about it at the same time. Since my move to Wisconsin, this marks the last Iowa meeting for me. Through the years I have made many professional and personal friends through my involvement in the Hawkeye AAHAM Chapter.

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Readers are encouraged to express their opinions of the written articles.
Articles and letters to the editor are subject to editing and condensing.

HAWKEYE CHAPTER ADMINISTRATION OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Pam Brindley | <i>President</i> |
| Tara Spidle | <i>Vice President / Program Chair</i> |
| Kristina Gursky | <i>Secretary / Registration / Membership Chair</i> |
| Connie Dudding | <i>Treasurer / Nominating Chair</i> |
| Luke Gruber | <i>Chairperson of the Board</i> |
| Melynda Crawford | <i>Board Member / Certification Chair / Hospitality Chair</i> |
| Vera Cummings | <i>Board Member / Hawkeye Website / Audit Chair</i> |
| Diana Hiatt | <i>Board Member / Newsletter Committee Chair</i> |
| Marki Stamatiades | <i>Board Member</i> |
| Shari Mitchell | <i>Board Member/Corporate Sponsorship Chair</i> |
| Mike Dobbs | <i>Legislative Chair</i> |

... Continued from Page 1

It has been my privilege to have served on various committees and boards. I will truly miss all of you and I have some very good memories of times past. Even though I am now living in the land of the Badger, I will always be a Hawkeye in heart, or would that be a Cyclone?

If you happen to be venturing northwards, whether on vacation or business, stop by and say hello when in the vicinity of Bayfield. It is beautiful up here no matter what the season. You never know, maybe I will see you in the future if Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin ever happen to combine conventions. I hope it happens so that I can see all of you again. ■

Living with the RAC:

Audit Results, Updates
and Better Practice Ideas
to Reduce Vulnerabilities



Day Egusquiza brings over 30 years experience in health care reimbursement, hospital business office operations, contracting and compliance implementation. Additionally, her experience includes eight years as a Director of a Physician Medical Management billing service and most recently completed an integrated business office between a hospital and a large physician clinic. She has been an entrepreneur in hospital and physician practice accounts receivable management and a leader in redesigning numerous organizations. Her work includes providing guidance as a compliance & APC educator while providing operational insight on the revenue cycle impacts of RAC/Medicare Recovery Audit Contractors. Additionally, she has been instrumental in researching and preparing national education on the impact of the Prescription Drug Benefit. Day's strength is her ability to 'operationalize' complex regulations into teachable components.

Ms Egusquiza is a nationally recognized speaker on continuous quality improvement (CQI), benchmarking, redesigning, reimbursement systems and implementing an operational focus of compliance- both in hospitals and practices. She has been on the AAHAM National Advisory Council, HFMA National Advisory Council, is a past President of the Idaho HFMA Chapter & recently received the Lifetime Achievement Award. She has been highlighted in JCAHO's *Six Hospitals in Search of Excellence*, Zimmerman's *Receivable Report*, HFMA's *HFM* and *Patient Account*, *AHIA Prospective*, and numerous healthcare newsletters along with a contributing author to *2006 Health Law and Compliance Update*. She received the Idaho Hospital Association "Distinguished Service Award" for her legislative work and training on new indigent law. Attendees at HFMA's ANI rated her in the top 25% for each year she has presented, earning her the 'Distinguished Speaker' award.

Her greatest accomplishments are her four wonderful children and her eight fabulous grandchildren.

What makes her unique? She has been in the trenches with us! ■

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!!!

FALL AAHAM MEETING, September 16th-17th

Once again, we are excited to have Day Egusquiza at our Fall meeting on Thursday, September 16th, 2010. Day will be presenting to us on RAC issues. Thursday afternoon, we plan to have some great round table discussions and allow enough time for attendees to get to the majority of the topic presentations. Topics of interest are timely physician chart completion, customer service excellence, early out services, workman's comp outsourcing, and much more. If you have a topic of interest, please email Tara Spidle, Program Coordinator at tspidle@d-c-h.org.

Hawkeye Chapter of AAHAM Board Meeting Minutes

May 26, 2010

Attendees: Pam Brindley, Vera Cummings, Marki Stamatiades, Tara Spidle, Kristina Gursky, Steph Hultman, Connie Dudding, Melynda Crawford, Shari Mitchell, Diana Hiatt, Kiel Christensen, Luke Gruber, and Mike Dobbs

President's Update:

- The national president's meeting was held before Legislative Day.
- Best practice roundtables were held.
- Recruiting ideas shared: Free meeting registration if a chapter member brings a non-member; drawings and gift cards; CFO reach-outs; CCT Compliance Certification.

Vera and Kiel will work together to enhance the Hawkeye Chapter of AAHAM's linked-in website.

A motion was made and carried for the chapter to purchase a copy of the professional and technical certification guides. With these, the chapter will develop PowerPoint presentations for certification sessions.

2011 will be the year of the new members. National has developed a new chapter award for retention of national members.

Legislative Update:

- Red Flag implementation has been delayed. Current rumors indicate it may be postponed indefinitely.
- The new healthcare bill is fragmented and it will be years before all of the components come together.

Legislative Day Updates:

- It was good the Iowa chapter sent additional people to get the opportunity to meet all senators and representatives

- The timing wasn't good as the healthcare bill just passed.
- Thank you notes were sent to those we met with.
- Each year AAHAM does this; more attention is given to the needs of healthcare.
- AAHAM lobbyist does a great job.

The minutes from the last meeting were reviewed and approved.

Membership Updates:

- As of 5/26, 108 members.
- Last fall-116 members.
- Several members no longer employed by healthcare institutions, no longer eligible for AAHAM membership.

Discussion was held about reduced pricing for a one-day fee. A motion was made and carried that a one-day fee would equal 2/3 of the total conference price.

Elections this year will have four officers and three board member positions open. Diana Hiatt will take on the nomination chair and committee.

The chapter currently has \$21,763.43 in the bank.

Discussion was held regarding the hosting of the sponsor fair, and if it would be beneficial to have it at only one meeting or at both the spring and fall. If both, vendors may not come to both meetings. If just one opportunity was presented to vendors, the vendors would want to be at the meeting with the best attendance. It's important for the board to push people to the vendor fair.

The next chapter audit will be done in the fall 2010.

The agenda for the Spring 2010 meeting was discussed. At hospitality for the spring 2010 meeting a Mexican theme is planned, along with Family Feud and the Wii.

Continued on Page 5 ...

Fall 2010 Meeting Agenda:

- Board meeting on 9/15, with meeting days on 9/16 and 9/17.
- Day will be speaking.
- CAH may be exempt from RAC—possible means Day will need to speak on something else.
- Roundtables.
- Judy Heard-RAC is a great speaker
- Laura Darst-HIPAA 5010.
- Other possible ideas:
 - Need roundtable topics—will ask membership.
 - Compliance—what others are doing?
 - QA and QI indicators.
 - Early out services from hospital perspective.

Discussion was held about the chapter projector. We can continue using Tara's. Melynda is buying a clicker.

Certification Updates:

- Some facilities are interested in staff certification
- Some respondents are interested in self-certification
- Questions can back on how to order technical manual
- The new professional manual was just released
- Melynda will survey to get an idea on how often study sessions should be held

Sponsors Updates:

- Discussion was held regarding going to a \$500 fee and giving all sponsors same benefit level.
- We need to ensure sponsors know this group is the user and influencer of purchasing decisions and products.

Hawkeye Highlights:

- Legislative Day Updates, President Meeting updates, Fall meeting highlights, Spring meeting wrap-up will be included in summer issue

- Winter issue should include bios and pictures of all officers and board members.

Website Updates:

- The website looks great.
- Info Central tab has been added; needs some tweaking for better functionality.
- Vera will review options for password protection; particularly for meeting handouts.

A motion was made and carried to adjourn. ■



Respectfully,

Kristina Gursky

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HAWKEYE CHAPTER OF AAHAM

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDING: 6/30/2010

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS:

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Cash in Bank | \$13,683.00 |
| Certificate of Deposit | \$7,500.00 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | \$21,183.00 |

LIABILITIES:

| | |
|----------|--------|
| Payables | \$0.00 |
|----------|--------|

EQUITY:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY | \$0.00 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|

OPERATING STATEMENT

REVENUES:

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Corporate Sponsors | \$4,950.00 |
| Registrations 2009 Spring | \$11,075.00 |
| Certifications | \$540.00 |
| Miscellaneous | \$130.00 |
| TOTAL REVENUE | \$16,695.00 |

EXPENSES:

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Travel | \$4,684.57 |
| Certifications | -- |
| Web Design | \$525.00 |
| Insurance Bond and Liability | -- |
| Spring Meeting | \$4,783.16 |
| Miscellaneous | -- |
| Membership Dues | -- |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$9,992.73 |

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| NET INCOME (LOSS) | \$6,702.27 |
|--------------------------|-------------------|

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| BEGINNING CASH BALANCE | \$13,683.00 |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| ENDING CASH BALANCE | \$20,385.27 |
|----------------------------|--------------------|

| | |
|---|-----------|
| OTHER (INCREASE OR DECREASE IN CASH) | -- |
|---|-----------|

FUTURE PAYABLES



Respectfully,

Connie Dudding
Chapter Treasurer

Attention to Contract Details Pays Off Bellin Health Realizes Refreshing Revenue Returns

Written By: Matt Golas and Pam Brindley, Wisconsin HFMA Chapter

For Bellin Health System in Green Bay, one of the keys to increasing the facility's financial health came down to a very simple idea. Find a detail oriented person and set them to work on paying attention to the many individual payor contracts and their financial and non-economic terms. When Wendy Schultz came on board in 2004, her task was just that straightforward - understand the contracts and make sure the terms were being honored.

By paying attention to contract details, Schultz, Bellin's Managed Care Leader, dramatically increased the health facility's financial bottom line. Since 2004, over \$7.8 million in underpayments have been recovered by her team. In 2008 alone, Bellin Health recovered \$2.5 million in underpayments. In 2009, that number was \$1.7 million and in the first seven months of Fiscal Year 2010, over \$900,000 has already been recovered. In addition, there is currently almost \$580,000 in disputed claims that are awaiting payment from insurance companies. "It is crucial for health systems to monitor their payments from insurance companies," Schultz said. "Improper contract loading by insurance companies and claim processing errors have resulted in huge amounts of underpaid claims."

Before hiring Schultz, Jeff Hampton, Team Leader of Revenue Cycle Management, had identified a major issue that plagues many providers. The heart of the problem was that Administration had taken painstaking care in negotiating a favorable contract but once the contract was signed, it was thrown into a file cabinet never to be seen again. He asked the simple question, "Are we being paid correctly?" When Schultz was hired, she had no medical background, but Hampton was confident that her business skills would translate well as she organized Bellin's contracts into a workable system. Looking back to the start of the project, Schultz now laughs.

"I didn't even know the difference between a UB and a 1500," she said.

Awaiting Schultz when she initially arrived at Bellin Health, currently home to a 167 bed acute care hospital, a 55 bed psychiatric hospital, a critical access hospital and 30 clinics, was a file cabinet full of contracts that were in total disarray. Schultz started by reading the terms of the contracts, paying special attention to the financial and non-economic terms like timely-filing limits. She took information regarding payment rates, entered it into a spreadsheet and distributed it to those on her team in the business office. Once the contracts were organized, Schultz began the process of auditing variances or anything else that appeared out of order and disputing underpaid claims.

Before long, the manual auditing process had become too tedious and Schultz brought in Pat Riley, Business Applications Manager, to automate the process by modeling the payor contracts. Schultz identified the terms that were valuable to her team to make sure that the hospital was being paid according to the terms of the contracts and Riley created a home grown system to identify variances in expected versus posted adjustments. Now, on a daily basis, Schultz's team runs daily variance reports. Each claim that hits the report is investigated to identify if the claim has been underpaid or if there is another type of error. Disputed and recovered underpayments are tracked on a spreadsheet that is reported to Administration on a monthly basis

When Chief Financial Officer Jim Dietsche was hired in 2005, he was instrumental in making another important change by involving Schultz in the contract negotiation process. "It is absolutely essential to involve those that work on the front line in the negotiation process," Schultz said. "They can identify potential pitfalls and tighten up contract language based on payor issues that they have experienced. This is valuable after the contracts are signed as well. Once a contract is in place, those working with insurance companies on a daily basis need to be aware of pertinent information like

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financial terms, timely filing deadlines and payor policies and procedures."

Another piece of the correct payment puzzle that Schultz's team had to master was monitoring refund requests from payors. "We receive hundreds of refund request letters and many of them are not valid," said Schultz. Her team has denied over \$1.1 million in refund requests since the process began in 2008. Each refund request letter is analyzed to determine its appropriateness before a refund is made. Some reasons for denied requests include those that require patients to pay more due to recalculation of benefits and those that have incorrect contract rates.



Berlin Health Staff. *Front row left to right:* Audrey Carson, Brenda Winney, Karen Sagen, and Sue Berg. *Back row:* Karen Shablak, Deb Vande Voort, Kristen Theisen, Andrea Engel, and Wendy Schultz.

With a net impact to the bottom line of nearly \$10 million, it is easy to see why Bellin Health has recognized the importance of this function and given Schultz the autonomy and resources to expand the functionality of the team and scope of the project. The team has grown from Schultz sifting through forgotten file cabinets on her own to eight people tracking contracts on a daily basis in six short years. The team now consists of four Reimbursement Specialists to monitor payments, three Refund Specialists to review refund request letters and work credit balances, and a Revenue Audit Coordinator to reduce risk by working with departments on billing compliance. "The annual salary of the entire team can be reclaimed within a month or two, so the return on investment is

remarkable," Schultz said. "It is not difficult to track the tangible impact of underpayment recoveries and denied refund requests. What is not as easy to quantify is the money saved in wasted hours and the overall impact that the team has had on issues that are now being addressed at the source. It is a little difficult to imagine how many dollars could have been lost if we had not been proactive and fixed the root cause of the issues we've identified."

Schultz is proud of the system that she has developed and believes that a similar process is now being implemented by many providers. When attending conferences, Schultz shares her story with other providers and challenges them to configure their own process in order to increase revenue. She is willing to lend assistance and answer any questions about implementing such a process. "In our current economy, it is so important that providers be paid according to the terms of these agreements if we're to remain financially stable," Schultz said. ■

Corporate Sponsors

The Iowa Hawkeye Chapter wishes to thank its Corporate Sponsors. Their generous financial contributions help ensure our chapter meets its goals and objectives, and allow us to provide educational programs, social functions, training programs for member certification, and the *Hawkeye Highlights* newsletter.

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2010 AAHAM Certification Calendar

February 15-26, 2010

■ CPAT/CCAT/CCT Exam Period

March 1, 2010

Registration deadline for all April/May Exams:

■ CPAM/CCAM & CPAT/CCAT/CCT

April 26, 2010 - May 1, 2010

■ Spring CPAM CCAM Exams

May 10-21, 2010

■ CPAT/CCAT/CCT Exam Period

June 1, 2010

Registration deadline for August Exams:

■ CPAT/CCAT/CCT

August 2, 2010

Registration deadline for Fall

■ CPAM/CCAM Exams

August 16-27, 2010

■ CPAT/CCAT/CCT Exam Period

September 1, 2010

Registration Deadline for November Exams

■ CPAT/CCAT/CCT

September 20-25, 2010

■ Fall CPAM/CCAM Exams

November 8-19, 2010

■ CPAT/CCAT/CCT Exams

December 1, 2010

Registration deadline for February 2011 Exams

■ CPAT/CCAT/CCT Exams



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Mark Your Calendars

Spring 2011 AAHAM Meeting

May 26-27, 2011

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If you've recently had a change to your personal contact information, please let AAHAM know. If we aren't able to contact you, we can't keep you informed of all the great benefits AAHAM has to offer. So please, keep us in mind as your life changes and let us know how to reach you.

To update your AAHAM records please contact Kristina Gursky by calling 651-481-6533, or by emailing her at kgursky@icsystem.com. ■

AAHAM Spring Meeting Photos

Submitted by: Steph Hultman, CPAT, CCAT



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Website Alert

The Iowa Hawkeye Chapter is excited to announce our website for members at www.hawkeyeaham.org. The site includes:

Chapter officers and board members
Upcoming events-Calendar of events
Chapter Bylaws
Sponsor information

Membership information
Link to the National AAHAM website
Current and Past Newsletters
Photos from past meetings

Watch for more information to be added every month. Since the site is new, we are looking for any ideas for additional information from our members. Please contact board member Vera Cummings at vcummings@bchealth.info with ideas.

