



The Virginia AAHAM Insider

A Newsletter by and for the members of the Virginia Chapter of AAHAM

Winter 2012

Volume 25 Issue 1

The President's Message

To: The Virginia Chapter of AAHAM Members:

Calendar year 2012 was a busy and successful year for the Virginia Chapter of AAHAM. We were successful in meeting our mission of providing the educational and operational needs of our membership.

The Virginia Chapter of AAHAM has built an excellent relationship with Palmetto and the VHHA. The Chapter assisted Palmetto in organizing two successful workshops within our state. Each of these workshops had over 100 individuals in attendance. As we look forward to 2013, we plan to continue this relationship in addition to working with other third parties.

At the National ANI Conference in Bonita Springs, The Virginia Chapter of AAHAM received the following recognition/awards: Chapter Excellence (Allan Tabas Division)-2nd place, Newsletter-3rd place, Recognition for our 30th Anniversary, Linda Pantry-Membership Scholarship and Brenda Chamber's Daughter for Member's Family Scholarship. Chris Fisher received the award for the highest score on the Professional Exam Nationally.

In calendar year 2012 all of our committees were very active and members have become more involved. We encourage everyone to join a committee. It is a great opportunity to expand your knowledge within the industry and a great networking opportunity.

As we look forward to 2013, our goals are to increase educational and networking opportunities, continue our excellent certification training, increase National and State membership, assist our members in keeping abreast of changes with Health Care Reform and legislative updates.

Respectfully,

Linda

Linda B. McLaughlin, CPAM

President, The Virginia Chapter of AAHAM



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Virginia at ANI

The 2012 ANI was held at Bonita Springs, FL in October. Virginia took home several national recognition awards.

Chapter Excellence Awards: For excellence in pursuing the goals of the America Association of Healthcare Administrative Management

Alan Tabas Division Chapters with 121 or More National Members
Second Place: Virginia Chapter

National Journal Awards:
In recognition of Excellence in Journalism and Graphic Design

Alan Tabas Division Chapters with 121 or More National Members
Third Place: Virginia Chapter "The Virginian"

Certification Excellence Award:
Congratulations for receiving the highest score for the first time taking the test during the Period September 1, 2011-April 30, 2012
Recipient:
Highest Score on CPAM - Chris Fisher, CPAM Virginia Chapter

Scholarship Winners:
Children of Members:
Taryn Chambers Daughter of Brenda Chambers



Annual Meeting and Conference and Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration

The Virginia Board of Directors—welcoming
members to the Thirtieth Anniversary
Banquet and Celebration



Member Spotlight—Chris Fisher, CPAM

By: Carol McCann

Every year National AAHAM (American Association of Healthcare Administrative Management) tests participating members through one of several Certification exams: CPAT (Certified Patient Account Technician); CCAT (Certified Clinic Account Technician); CPAM (Certified Patient Account Manager) and CCAM (Certified Clinic Account Manager), and they have recently added a Compliance exam. The Technical exams are 2 hours each in three multiple-choice sections. The Professional exams are eight full hours each broken into four sections: Patient Access / Front Desk, Billing, Credit / Collections, and Revenue Cycle Management. When I interviewed Chris on this subject, she pointed out that she feels just passing the Professional exam is a feat, and anyone who has passed it would agree with her.

However, as with all things in life, there are those who excel, and Chris Fisher is one of those persons, achieving the top score in the country for the year. To pass the exams, the examinee must achieve at least 70%. Chris blew that away with more than 90 % on every section her first try. Congratulations Chris!

Just to tell you a little about Chris: She has been a member of AAHAM since 2010, and is our

Chapter Secretary / Chair of the Publications Committee, so she is the person who puts together the wonderful newsletter we have every quarter. As a former secretary, I can personally attest to how much work the newsletter is, so we are lucky to have her dedication and hard work for the group. Chris works for Augusta Health and has for 33 years, which made me wonder if she started when she was 3 since she looks so young. She has one son, Jason, and is her church Secretary as well.

At Augusta Health, Chris is the Patient Access Coordinator / Chargemaster Specialist - two titles that might seem unrelated, but that actually are related through the clinical / medical side of the facility. Chris worked in the ER (Emergency Room) for 26 years and took the Chargemaster Specialist position when it opened up about five years before they started their Financial Counseling program in the ER. Because of her excellent background in the ER, they put her in charge of the Financial Counselors, then asked that she helped set up the newly formed Patient Access Department. She is in the process of transitioning to the Patient Access Department permanently and at that time

will give up the chargemaster position. Right now she reports to two different people for the two halves of her job.

Chris has positions of some significant responsibility at work and yet she still sought her certification. I asked her what her what her motivation was and why the certification was important to her, and she told me that she has always believed in education and loves to learn new things every chance she gets. She didn't participate in AAHAM until Katie Hughes, CPAM, Chairman of the Board, Virginia Chapter, came to Augusta Health and brought her certification and love of the organization with her. Katie was instrumental in getting Augusta Health to start offering certification to all Business Office staff which has ballooned into somewhere around 50 certifications, some of them dual certifications. At that time, Chris achieved her CPAT certification.

Continued on next page

Member Spotlight—Chris Fisher, CPAM—*continued from previous page*

By: Carol McCann

As the person with the top exam scores in the county for the year, I wanted Chris to tell the readers what study approach she would recommend to others that are either thinking about taking the exam, or are scheduled to take it. Chris recommended two starting points: Find a study buddy or two, and start with the CPAT or CCAT exams. This approach will give the examinee someone to help them study and the confidence to take the Professional exam. Chris said that she and two of her co-workers would have lunch once a week and quiz each other. Another recommendation is to take as many of Leanna Marshall's Saturday classes as they can. Look on the Virginia AAHAM website for the schedule. (http://vaaaham.com/Calendar_of_Events.html) Finally, Chris indicated that she used the National Study Guides, made up flash cards, and of course, studied almost every evening for several weeks.

I asked Chris what she thinks or hopes certification will do for her, and also if the studying will help her in her job, or if she thinks her job helped her on the test. She indicates that it actually goes both ways: the job definitely helped her pass the exam, but studying for it forced her to learn a lot more about areas that she hadn't had direct

involvement in, like billing. Chris indicated that the exam also helps her understand a lot more about what management personnel in other areas are talking about and the issues they may be having. She has found it useful from the patient access / accounting perspectives and charge master / clinical viewpoints. Chris hasn't really determined if getting her certification will help with promotion opportunities or not, but it certainly is a source of great personal satisfaction to her, as well it should be. Chris said that they already have several people in patient access that have their technical certifications, and she is hopeful that that Patient Access Supervisors will obtain their certifications as well.

Chris wanted to tell the readers that in addition to the personal satisfaction she gained from the accomplishment, she has enjoyed her membership in the group. She has made many contacts that are always willing to help if you need something, and they are just a fun group to associate with.

Finally, I asked Chris what might surprise people about her, and she told me that she does a lot of crafts. She makes leather wrapped and beaded jewelry (bracelets are her favorite), and she makes many different household items as well as making quilts. The aforementioned son, Jason, is building her a website so she can sell the items she makes. All in all a talented individual.

☐



Bio: Carol McCann, CPAM is an independent consultant with more than 25 years (oops, I guess it is 30 now) in healthcare. She can be reached at cgmccann@verizon.net.



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Pre-Encounter: A Mission to Success

By John Cook

A group of North Carolina Revenue Cycle professionals participated in two roundtable discussions on Pre-Admission ideas, processes, and successes. The following synopsis of those discussions provides insight into this critical process for managers and team leads as they seize the opportunity to use this tool for success.

Why is a successful Pre-Encounter program important?

- To create efficiencies to promote patient satisfaction and financial accuracy by educating patients prior to service.
- To educate the patient, both clinically and financially.
- To get it right the first time in both task and customer service, resulting in reducing errors and improved patient experience.
- To successfully manage the financial risk of uncompensated care.
- To identify possible charity care.
- To financially clear a patient prior to the service (includes insurance verification, collections, and authorizations).

- To help the patient understand current financial policies.
- To provide the patient a first experience of service excellence.

Where have efficiencies and results been experienced?

- Accurate information upfront resulting in cleaner claims and expedited payment.
- Reduction in A/R days.
- Increased upfront collections.
- One on one communication with the patient.
- Improved service excellence scores.
- An educated patient, understanding their financial obligations, prior to receiving their first statement.
- Meeting potential challenges at the beginning.
- Establishing expectations

Where have problems been experienced?

- Complete buy in of the process of all involved (i.e. clinical and physician).

- Scheduling that is not centralized in the Patient Access area or department.
- No bottom line or end result identified.

What approaches are working?

- The Pre-Service Collection Approach: The overall goal is to collect monies such as deductibles, co-pays, and estimated liabilities during their pre-admission discussion. It also offers the opportunity to gather the needed information to generate a clean claim. This is the best chance to refer patients to other options if they are unable to pay.
- The Communication Approach: The overall goal of this approach is to obtain the most accurate information that will generate clean claims, prevent denied claims, expedite payment, and reduce A/R days from better patient information. Another goal of this approach is to provide the patient with a better understanding of what to financially expect and be more prepared to pay the portion they will owe.

Continued on next page

- **The Call In Approach:**
The patient actually initiates the call to the provider, which will provide an initiative on the part of the patient to prepare for their visit. One provider in particular has experienced overwhelming results.
- A combination of approaches based on your technology and provider goals and needs.

What are some tips for success?

- Making the patient feel at ease.
- Obtain the most current and accurate information.
- Centralized Scheduling housed in the Patient Access area.
- Communicate critical information to patient (i.e. educating them regarding their financial responsibility).
- Communicate and make available options.
- Treat the encounter as an advantage to both the provider and the patient.

Offer Service Excellence

It is critical to define and deploy a plan or an approach that will work for you.

If you need further information on this roundtable or would like to discuss any of these ideas, please feel free to contact me at

jcook@prorecoveryinc.com

John Cook is Client Relations Manager for PRC, Inc. His career has included twenty two years as a Revenue Cycle Director for Appalachian Regional Healthcare System, in Boone, NC.

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Job Postings

VCU Health System is currently recruiting for a **Hospital Compliance Auditor**. In this position, you will lead the initiative for the design, implementation and maintenance of the VCUHS Compliance Service's Proactive Auditing and Monitoring Program for hospital billing. Candidates will conduct and oversee the reviews of hospital claims to ensure compliance with all applicable federal, state, local and payor specific requirements.

Qualified candidates will have a Bachelors Degree in Business or Healthcare related field. A minimum of three (3) years of progressively responsible experience in hospital/physician coding and documentation reviews; healthcare compliance and working with electronic health records is required. Two (2) years of auditing work experience is preferred. Previous experience with personal computers and software applications to include Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint is required. Candidate will have the following: CCP, CPC-H, CPC-P, CPMA, CCS, CCS-P, and/or other related coding certification.



Woodrow Samuel Annual Scholarship Application

Purpose:

The Virginia State AAHAM Scholarship Award was established with the primary purpose of educating its membership in the management of health care receivables. As the chapter increased in membership and cash equity, the concept of a scholarship program was initiated by the Executive Board of Directors and was first offered in the fall of 1987.

The Executive Board of Virginia AAHAM has continued to make the scholarship program available as it is believed educational funds are a benefit to individual members, the Chapter, and dependents of our members. In 2007, the name of the scholarship was changed to the Woodrow Samuel Scholarship Award to recognize a lifetime member of the VA State AAHAM organization.

A maximum of \$1,000 scholarship award will be given.

Eligibility:

Eligible nominees must:

- Be a Virginia AAHAM member or a child of a Virginia AAHAM member as of January 1 of the current year.

- Eligible nominees can apply for the scholarship award on an annual basis.

- Members must be employed full time in a healthcare related field and dependents must be enrolled in an accredited college or school.

- Chapter dues of the member must be paid prior to the acceptance of requested scholarship applications.

- Classes taken must be taken during the current school year.

Nomination Procedure:

Nominees must:

- Complete the application form

- Include at least one letter of reference.

- Include or attach any documentation you would like to have considered.

- Include an essay on why winning the scholarship is important.

Submission:

The form will be completed and returned to the address listed at the end of the application. This application will be postmarked no later than January 30th of the year the application is submitted to the Virginia State AAHAM Scholarship Chairman.

All application materials and supporting documentation will be reviewed by the Virginia State Scholarship Committee. After all applications are reviewed, the applicant will be notified if they have been selected as a Scholarship recipient by the Chair of the Scholarship Committee.

Review Process:

All applications will be reviewed and scored by the Scholarship Committee. Points are awarded based on the following criteria:

- Active in school related organizations (e.g. Honor Society, FFA, Ecology Club, Science Club, Beta Club, Student Council, etc.)
- Elected leadership position in school or community related clubs or organizations
- Demonstrates community involvement (e.g., membership in Scouts, 4-H, civic group/club, volunteer work)
- References
- Essay (Explains why _____ is important to the applicant and/or his/her family.)
- Awards received for school or community involvement

Section A—Application

Type or print all answers clearly. Fill in all information completely. Use a blank sheet of paper to continue answers, and number them to correspond with the question number (for example, D—Goals).

Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Daytime Telephone _____ Evening Telephone _____

Date of Birth _____ E-mail address _____

Present Place of Employment or Accredited School _____

Address of Employer or School _____

Dollar Amount of Scholarship Being Requested _____

Section B—Education

Current School/College You Plan to Attend _____

Section C—Essay and Reference Letter

For Virginia members, please write an essay in 250 words or less on how the healthcare field has benefited you and the reason you would like to further your education. For dependent's of Virginia State AAHAM members, please write an essay in 250 words or less on the reason you would like to further your education and the reason you have chosen your career field major. Feel free to list any education experiences which have

Certification... why bother?

You may wonder why you should bother with obtaining your certification. After all, it's a lot of work—Let us enlighten you!

Benefits of obtaining AAHAM certification:

- Professional development
- Individual enrichment
- Employer awareness
- Recognition by industry and build a network of connections in the elite group that shares your designation
- Personal challenge and satisfaction
- National recognition
- Recognition and access to the positions and promotions you seek and deserve
-

—AND—

Virginia AAHAM offers a certification payment reward for passing the professional exam. AAHAM will reimburse the member for the cost of the exam.

If you are interested in testing your knowledge and gaining the recognition that comes with certification, contact Leanna Marshall for additional information.

Leanna Marshall, CPAM

PFS Consultant

UVA Health System (Retired)

Phone: (434)293-8891

Fax: (804)977-8748

814 Montrose Avenue

Charlottesville, VA 22902

An AAHAM certification demonstrates your:

Commitment—to your field and your ongoing professional development.

Expertise—you possess the knowledge to meet the industry's highest standards and the capacity to pass a rigorous certification examination.

Professionalism—your pursuit of excellence supports the quality of service in your career and in the healthcare industry.

CPAM & CCAM exams are considered to be the best indication of knowledge in our field. Set a goal or make a promise to yourself to pass the exam. It will be gratifying to prove to yourself that you can pass this difficult exam, and that your years of experience and hard work will be evident to all by the CPAM/CCAM designation after your name.



CPAM Study Sessions will be conducted by Leanna Marshall on the third Saturday of the month from 9:00am until approximately 3:00pm.

*Contact Leanna for more
information on CPAM
certification or study sessions.*



2012 Membership Application

Please enter your data below, and then send this form, along with the \$30.00 annual dues to the address below to join or renew your membership with The Virginia Chapter of AAHAM.

Take Advantage of these important benefits...

- *Problem solving and solution sharing with your associates;
- *Educational seminars and workshops
- *Reduced Fees for Chapter Education Events
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- *AAHAM Membership Directory
- *Chapter Newsletter
- *Educational scholarship opportunities
- *Membership Directory

Please enter your information below.

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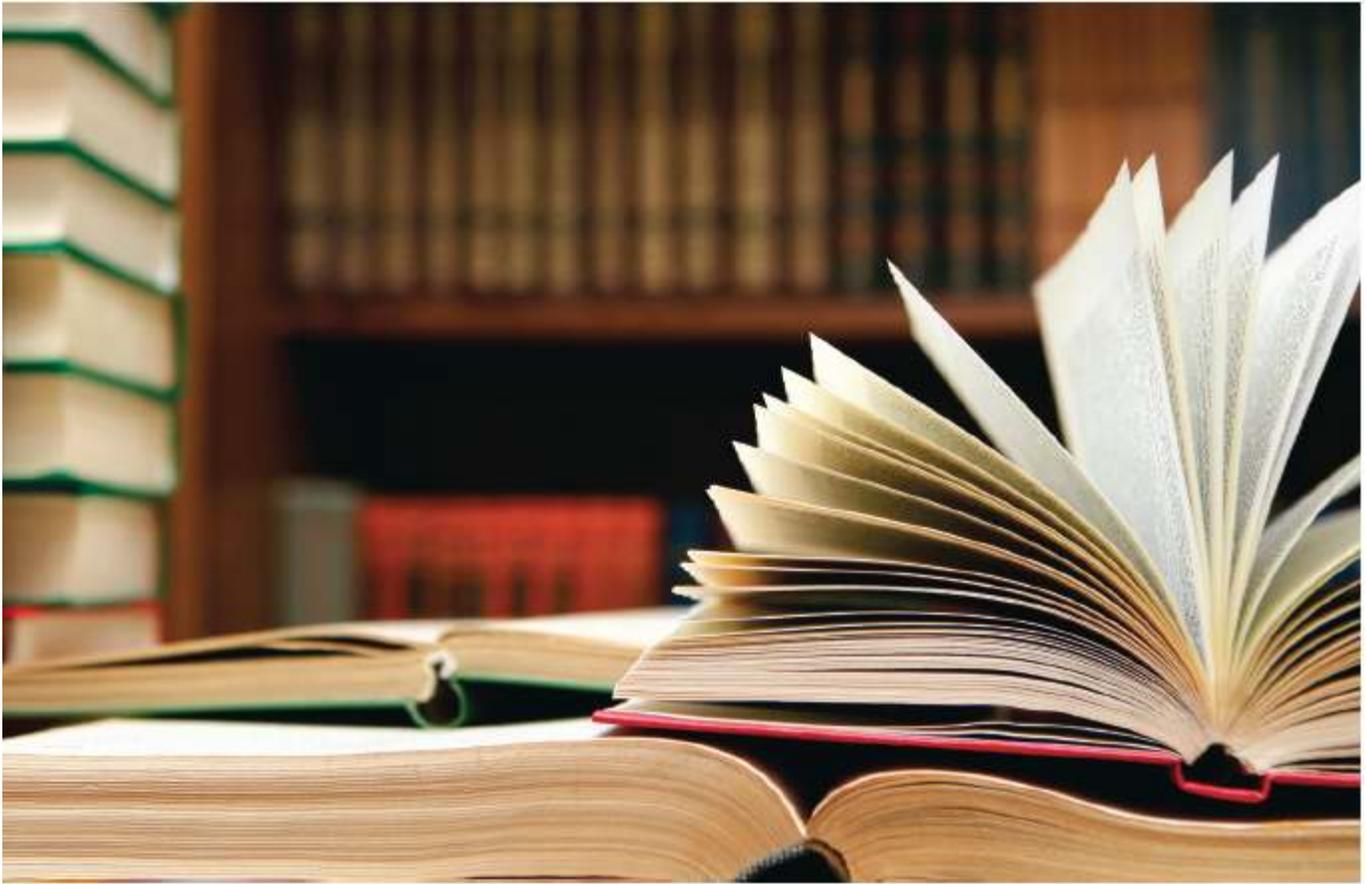
For additional information, contact Miguel Wilkens @ 410-227-3051 or via email @ mwilkens@medical-account.com.

Please mail the completed form with your dues Payment of \$30.00 to the following address:

Treasurer, Virginia AAHAM
David Nicholas
6800 Versar Center, Suite 400
Springfield, Virginia 22151
-OR-

Take advantage of our new online membership application and payment options. Visit our website at http://www.vaaaham.com/Membership_Application.html.

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Kathleen Hughes, CPAM

Director of Patient Accounting

Augusta Health

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President

(Committee Chairperson: Nominating Committee; Accounts Receivable/Third Party Payer Committee)

Linda McLaughlin, CPAM

Director, Finance and Governmental Services

VCU Health System

PO Box 980227 Richmond, VA 23298-0227

Office — (804)828-6315 Fax — (804)828-6872

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First Vice President

(Committee Chairperson: Membership & Chapter Development: Web Site Development: Chapter Awareness)

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Sale and Marketing Associate

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Second Vice President

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Phone—(804)327-6899 Email—jpustilnik@apallc.com



Secretary

(Committee Chairperson: Vendor Awards Committee)

Chris Fisher, CPAT

Chargemaster Specialist

Augusta Health

PO Box 1000, Fishersville, VA 2293

Office—(540)332-5030 Email—cfisher@augustahealth.com

Virginia AAHAM Executive Board 2010-2011



Treasurer

(Committee Chairperson: Vendor Awards Committee)

David Nicholas, CPAM

Director of Operations RMC, Inc.

Office - (703)321-8633 Fax- (703)321-8765

Email: David.Nicholas@RMCcollects.com



Appointed Board Member

(Committee Chairperson: Finance Committee; Constitution & By-Laws Committee; Historical Committee)

Brenda Chambers, CPAM, CCAM

Revenue Integrity

HCA - RSSC Capital Division

7300 Beaufont Springs Drive; Boulders VIII – 2nd Floor;

Richmond, VA 23225

Office—(804)267-5790 Fax—(804)267-5791

Email—Brenda.Chambers@hcahealthcare.com



Appointed Board Member

(Committee Chairperson: Certification Committee)

Leanna Marshall, CPAM

UVA Health System (Retired)

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Phone—(434)293-8891 Fax—(434)977-8748

Email—ayden1@embarqmail.com



Honorary Board Member

Michael Worley, CPAM

Revenue Cycle Consultant

1807 Mount Vernon Street, Waynesboro, VA 22980

Office—(540)470-0020 Email—mworley@ntelos.net



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– Administrator, Inpatient Psychiatric Facility

> **Business Office Outsourcing – Total or Partial**

From billing through collections, follow-up, appeals, and recovery, RMC has the commitment and experience to be your trusted business partner.

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- Home Health

> **Insurance Billing – Follow-Up – Recovery**

- Medicare Deductible & Coinsurance
- Medicaid
- Managed Care
- Workers' Compensation
- Blue Cross
- Commercial Insurance

> **Revenue Recovery Projects for Underpayments**

> **Denials Management**

> **Clean-Up Projects for Very Aged or Backlogged Receivables**

> **Credit Balance Audit and Resolution**

> **Interim Management**

> **Training**

"We're very pleased with the level of collections coming in, and with how RMC works to build the team. They've given us much better coordination; it's like they're part of our staff. In addition to billing and follow-up they helped implement our new computer software system, setting up billing protocols and helping us make processes more efficient."

– Administrator, Ambulatory Surgery Center

National News— www.aaham.org

Audio Conference Webinars

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January 16, 2013, 1:30-3:00 PM EST

Overview of OIG's Recent Scrutiny of
Provider-Based Billing: Everything You
Need to Know

February 13, 2013, 1:30-3:00 PM EDT

The AAHAM Journal has gone green!

In order to save resources and be
ecologically responsible. Members can
access the Journal from the national
AAHAM web site

www.aaham.org

Important Dates for 2013:3

- **Legislative Day—April 3-4, 2013 at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill in Washington DC**
- **2013 ANI—October 16-18, 2013 at the Sheraton New Orleans in New Orleans, LA**

Stay up-to-date on Administrative Simplification and other healthcare
Legislative issues of interest by visiting the National AAHAM web site:

<https://www.capwiz.com/aaham/home/>



Sponsorship

The Virginia Chapter of the American Association of Healthcare Management (VA AAHAM) exists to provide or facilitate professional education, promote professional excellence, provide opportunities for sharing management strategies and tactics through professional networking. You and your organization are important to this mission. Virginia AAHAM benefits by drawing on the experience and education that you and your organization can bring to the activities and efforts of our association. Virginia AAHAM's mission also benefits from the financial support that many organizations provide. I hope that you will consider supporting Virginia AAHAM this year.

—Denise Martin, Vendor Sponsorship / Corporate Partners Chair

dmmart515@aim.com

Platinum Sponsorship—\$1,500

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Advanced Patient Advocacy
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Bronze Partner

ROI Companies

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Mark you calendars!**Upcoming AAHAM events:**

The Virginia Chapter of AAHAM will start the year by offering a Back to Basic session at VCU Health System on January 26, 2013. Our Back to Basic Sessions are excellent opportunities to catch up on new regulations in addition to reviewing current requirements. This session also provides you with information to assist in preparing for the AAHAM Certification Exams (CPAM, CCAM, CPAT, CCAT, and CCT),

Email Linda McLaughlin for more information.

lmclaughlin@mcvh-vcu.edu

**To: All Virginia Chapter of AAHAM Members:**

The Virginia Chapter of AAHAM Education Committee, in an effort to provide our members with "Back to Basics" training is looking for interested parties to conduct a 30-45 minute webinar series. The web series would focus on professional development for operational level staff or first time managers. Presenters can share their professional experiences in networking, positioning yourself to grow in your organization, establishing yourself as a leader and a go-to person, etc. Please contact Gio Naranjo at gnaranjo@claimlogic.com or 405-548-1492 if you can assist in this education opportunity.

Linda McLaughlin, CPAM

President, The Virginia Chapter of AAHAM

Jack Pustilnik

Second Vice President, The Virginia Chapter of AAHAM

Watch our web site for details:

www.vaaaham.com

Contest for Newsletter Articles!

Writers Wanted!



The Virginia Chapter of AAHAM will award **\$100** to the author of the best article submitted to the Publications Committee during 2013. Submit articles to Chris Fisher cfisher@augustahealth.com. Newsletters are published quarterly. Don't miss your chance to be read, recognized, and rewarded for your writing talent.

This publication is brought to you through the collective efforts of the **Publications Committee**

Chris Fisher, CPAM

cfisher@augustahealth.com

Carol McCann, CPAM

cgmccann@verizon.net

Bonita Brubaker, CCAT

Sally Raynard

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Tammy Shipe, CCAT

tshipe@augustahealth.com

What is AAHAM?

AAHAM is a premier professional organization for healthcare administrative management. Our goal is to provide quality member services and leadership in the areas of education, communication, representation, professional standards and certification. Virginia AAHAM was founded in 1982 as the American Guild of Patient Account Management. Initially

formed to serve the interests of hospital patient account managers, AAHAM has evolved into a national membership association that represents a based constituency of healthcare professionals.

COMMITTEES

- ◆ Third Party Payer
- ◆ Government Relations
- ◆ Publications
- ◆ Chapter Awareness

- ◆ Website Development
- ◆ Membership
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Scholarship
- ◆ Finance
- ◆ Chapter of Excellence

If you are interested in serving on a committee contact one of the Board Members.