

Keystone Kronicles

August 20, 2021

Summer 2021



President's Letter- Lisa Laudeman, CRCE

On behalf of the entire Keystone Board of Directors, we hope this newsletter finds our members safe and well this summer season. Many of us take time during our summer season to visit the beach, our parks, complete (or finish) home improvement projects. Whatever you do, be safe. Here are a few safety tips: Change the batteries in your smoke alarms and detectors, swim/boat safely, stay hydrated, eat healthy foods, and connect with others.

Keystone held our first "Connect with Others" event in 2021. Our Networking event was held on July 22, 2021 at the Vineyard at Hershey. Approximately 40 members attended with a good time had by all. AMOR AAHAM Cookbooks were available for sale, wine/beer trivia was held throughout the evening, and everyone left with trivia prizes and these amazing AAHAM Cookies.



The Keystone Education Committee has taken the summer months off and will kick off the Fall Virtual Meeting sessions later this month. Watch your email for information on the upcoming meetings. The Keystone Board will continue to monitor COVID-19 and related guidelines to determine if a Winter in-person meeting will be held. Our Education Committee will be sending out a member survey to determine interest and availability of our members to attend. It is extremely important that you respond to the survey to help the Education Committee plan accordingly.

National AAHAM News

The 2021 AAHAM ANI will be held as a Virtual Meeting this year. The meeting is scheduled for October 5-7, 2021. If you are not a National Member, consider joining to take advantage of the many membership perks available to our National Members.

Many changes have occurred with our National Certification program during 2021. Online manuals have been created and ProctorU fees are now included in the cost of each Certification exam. The Summer Certification Webinar Services have been updated to include relevant 2021 information and much more.

Payer News

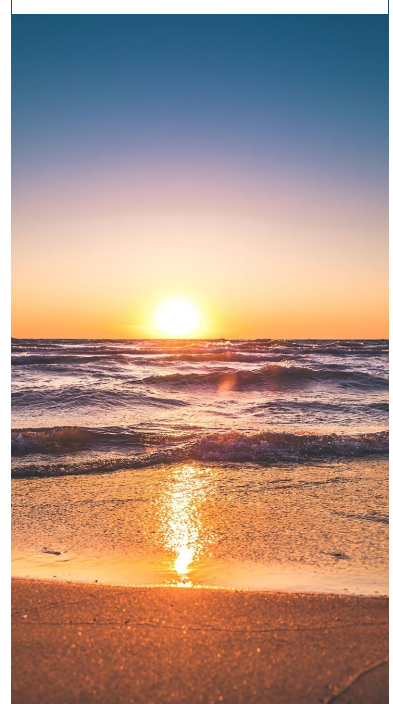
Possible major win for hospitals, CMS announced plans to abandon a plan to require hospitals to disclose certain negotiated rates reached with Medicare Advantage Plans on Medicare Cost Reports.

Revenue Cycle and COVID - Competing in the employment market

Because of COVID-19's push to a remote workforce, hospital revenue cycle professionals find themselves competing for staff not just locally, but nationally. The pandemic did not initiate the virtual workforce but it certainly accelerated our acceptance. Many revenue cycle managers/directors are considering a hybrid work option rather than bringing everyone back in the office. Remote work has also brought new security issues, both in cybersecurity and with protecting patient's privacy. The right technology should be in place with proper workflows developed for remote staff.

Salaries are also increasing as our reimbursements go down and costs increase. Staffing shortages, with a focus on the need for physicians and nurses, were a concern pre-COVID nationwide. According to Health Affairs, there is also a looming forecast of a national deficit in the healthcare workforce by 2025.

Remote workers can work for any organization, anywhere. Due to COVID, many of us are competing for staff not just against other hospitals in our region, but against health systems nationwide making revenue cycle professionals think outside the box with hiring and maintaining our current workforce.



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Upcoming Events

Certification Exams

September 20-24, 2021
October 18-22, 2021
November 15-19, 2021
December 13-17, 2021

AAHAM Virtual ANI- October 5-7, 2021

Membership Update



National Membership -

166 members

116 Renewals

27 New memberships

1 New Student

Member

14 Student Members

4 Lifetime

Memberships

4 Retired National

Local Membership -

17 members

15 Renewals

0 Retired

0 Student Members

2 New Memberships

Total 2021 Membership-- 178

Welcome to our New Members!

Local Members

Robin Zink

Lancaster Orthopedic Group

National Members

Sandra Manders

Wellspan Chambersburg Hospital

Karen Miller

Lehigh Valley Health Network

Sheri Nyce

Lehigh Valley Health Network

Jill Peak

Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute

Kim Peters

Penn Credit

Stephen Radziewicz

Lehigh Valley Health Network

Heather Schneider

Penn Highlands Healthcare

Deborah Shelly

Wellspan

Amissa Silverstein

UPMC ASC Managed Services

Julie Zechman

Penn Credit

Membership Update:

We are halfway through the year and our membership remains strong. Its been a bumpy road over the last year but our chapter has been able to maintain the same amount of national members compared to last year. We fully anticipate we will surpass last years national membership. Currently our Local membership is down by 23 people. Most of this decrease is because local members upgraded to National members which is fantastic.

If you know anyone that is interested in Joining please let me know and I will contact them. AAHAM has a lot of benefits including keeping up with the latest National and Local regulations, Chapter education meetings/webinars and the opportunity for peer networking. In addition, the opportunity to become certified in the various Revenue Cycle levels.

Nick Murray has graciously offered to help out with the Student membership. This is a very important role in helping promote our membership. Thanks Nick for helping out with our membership.

Dues are still 25.00 for local membership and 209.00 for National membership. Student memberships and National Members who have retired are also free.

Any question please feel free to contact me

Thanks

Dale Brumbach CRCS, CRCP
Keystone AAHAM Membership Chairman
1-800-720-7293 (Direct Line)
717-329-8695 (Cell)

Legislative Update

Stan Slipakoff, Esq.– Legislative Chair



Before starting the Legislative Report, I want to point out that Legislation from Washington is going extinct. Since the parties rarely can agree, we have government by Executive Order, repealing regulations, amending regulations or issuing new regulations. With that preface, here are some changes that are on their way.

Surprise Billing Regulations. Washington has issued new draft regulations on this subject. They are currently going through the

public review and comment period. They are expected to go into effect on 1/1/21. Some states have already passed their own rules on this subject. Once the federal regulations are in effect, the states that already have laws/regulations in place, will have to amend them or make sure they conform with the federal requirements.

Here are some of the proposed federal requirements:

- No individual receiving emergency care at an out-of-network facility or by an out-of-network provider may receive surprise billing. The surprise billing will need to be settled between the provider and the insurer.
- Once a person is no longer in emergency status and is receiving Post-Stabilization care, they can be subject to the “no surprise billing”. The patient needs to sign a consent form that they will pay the costs. It sounds simple, but it isn’t. The treating physician needs to certify that the patient was medically competent to consent to paying the bill when they signed the consent. There are a list of things the physicians must consider before they can certify competency. This will make for an entirely new field for the lawyers to litigate.

Hospital Price Transparency: This is a hot-button issue for the President. It requires hospitals to make clear and accessible pricing information for outpatient care available to the public **online**. So far, only around 6% of all hospitals are fully compliant. Most hospitals are against this requirement. They are concerned that they will be forced to release priority business information. Also, they point out, there is no way to accurately predict the billing amount before the services are rendered. As an example consider a patient receiving a heart cauterization. Before doing the procedure, the doctor doesn’t know how many arteries will need to be treated, what is the patient’s current/past heart history, what other conditions exist, etc. The hospital would need to list multiple pricing amounts for each service provided. For now, the hospitals are losing the fight.

In case your hospital fails to meet the 1/1/22 deadline for compliance, CMS will fine them. The proposed minimum fines are:

- Hospitals with 30 beds or less will be fined a fixed fee of \$300 per day.
- Hospitals with more than 30 beds will be fined \$10 per day for each bed. The fines will be capped at \$5,500 per day. Depending on a hospital’s size, their annual fines could range from \$110,000 to more than \$2 million.

Cybersecurity. On July 28th, President Biden issued a list of key industries which need to improve their cybersecurity. While not specifically mentioned, given its size, Healthcare should be made part of the plan. In 2017, Healthcare represented 17.1% of the country’s GDP. In 2021, it is expected to be 20%. The President didn’t provide the details for this plan or how much federal involvement and funding there would be. **Trust me, this plan will cost hospitals money!!!**

Certification Corner- Summer 2021



Congratulations to our PA Keystone AAHAM Members who recently earned their certifications and recertifications! We are very proud of you and wish you much future success!!!

Certification Calendar

Upcoming Certification Exam Dates 2021 – Monthly – the 3rd week of each month

September 20-24, 2021
September 2021 exams

October 18-22, 2021
October 2021 exams

November 15-19, 2021
November 2021 exams

December 13-17, 2021
December 2021 exams

**Applications to take an exam are due in to the AAHAM office 30 days prior to a testing period.

April- June 2021	July 2021	July 2021 (continued)
Maria Sanchez Melquiades, CRCS (Apr)	Nancy Abraham, CRCS	Jessica Crews, CRCS
Theresa Jarbeck, CRCS (May)	Christy Bono, CRCS	Leslie Werner, CRCS
Trish Bollinger, CRCS (June)	Thynitha Casiano, CRCS	

Certification Exams – Offered monthly for more flexibility

AAHAM offers all certification exams monthly, enabling test takers to have more flexible scheduling options to become certified when the time is right for them. All certification exams are being offered on the third week of each month. The new certification exam calendar and registration links are available at <https://www.aaham.org/Certification.aspx>

All exam registrations will need to be submitted at least 30 days prior to the scheduled exam date, and there are no changes to the registration fees. The 30-day registration deadline now applies to both new exams and section retakes, offering a faster track to becoming certified for those who are ready to take an exam for the first time. The certification exams will continue to be delivered either remotely online through ProctorU, or with a local in-person proctor. AAHAM will work with examinees to assist them in making the necessary proctoring arrangements for the exams.

Do You Need CEUs? A few options below:

1) A Perfect Opportunity for you to earn CEUs is approaching!

You can earn **up to 19 AAHAM CEUs** by participating in the **2021 AAHAM Annual National Institute (ANI)**. This is a 2-day event which will be held October 6 and 7, 2021 on a Zoom virtual platform to allow more members to attend.

The live sessions will be held from 10:30am to 6pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on Day 1, and 10:30am to 5pm on Day 2. The educational sessions will be recorded. Therefore, all paid registrants will have access to the ANI recorded sessions so attendees can listen to the sessions at their convenience. "Attendance" can be any time the member can listen to the sessions and can obtain CEUs! This will allow members to earn up to 19 CEUs for two days of education. Just one more way that AAHAM is working with our members to ensure they have access to quality education in an affordable way.

2) From Summer Certification Webinars to Recorded Sessions in 2021

Typically, the summer months are filled with Certification Webinars (from May to August). This year, the National AAHAM Certification Committee has worked hard to bring us recorded sessions for all the certification modules. You can listen to these On-Demand Webinars whether you are studying for your certification exam, you need a refresher, or you need CEUs to maintain your certification. You select the time and place: Listen, Learn and Earn CEUs!

Type of ANI Registration	Member	Non-Member
Early-Bird	\$199	\$299
Regular	\$299	\$399
1-Day	\$179	\$279

3) AAHAM Fall Educational Webinars

November 10, 2021 – Servant Leadership – Amy Sherman, MedStar Health

December 1, 2021 – CPT Code Updates for the Charge Description Master – Lauren Rose and Charlotte Kohler, Kohler Healthcare

4) In-Person Educational Sessions...

I am hopeful, and I look forward to seeing you all again in person. We'll have to see when we can hold a meeting safely for all attendees. Until then, there are opportunities to learn and earn CEUs, from the comfort of your home or office!

Please contact me if you have any questions or need assistance with the certification process. Enjoy the rest of your Summer!

Carolyn Brown, BBA, CRCE-I
 Pennsylvania Keystone AAHAM Certification Chairperson
 717-901-4238 (Direct Line)
 717-926-3570 (Cell)
 Email: cbrown@oip.com



*The Premier Organization for
Revenue Cycle Professionals*

PENNSYLVANIA KEYSTONE CHAPTER

VOLUNTEER EVENT



HOME BUILDING

You don't have to know a thing about construction to help build a Habitat Home! All you need is enthusiasm and a willingness to learn.

We provide the tools, training, and encouragement, and have projects for all skill levels and interests!

Saturday, September 18th, 2021

8:00am – 3:00pm

York, PA – Address TBA

9 volunteers needed for the event, first come first serve!

Register via <https://donate.yorkhabitat.org/charities/2386-york-habitat-for-humanity/volunteer>

1. Click-sign up for Keystone AAHAM date (September 18)

****You will have to register with York Habitat, and then use the Password AAHAM to register for the AAHAM event.**

Any questions contact Toney Fedullo

tfedullo@nragroup.com

717-599-6404

AMOR Healing Kitchen Fundraiser

Meet Maria Kelly, Founder of AMOR Healing Kitchen

Natalie Hefner, CRCE, Secretary VA Chapter of AAHAM

The AMOR Healing Kitchen is based in Charleston, South Carolina. They make and deliver nutritious, healthy food, using seasonal organic ingredients sourced from local and surrounding area farms, made with love by youth volunteers. On a weekly basis, Kitchen Mentors teach AMOR's Teen Chefs culinary skills who prepare delicious, nutritious meals for people undergoing or recovering from medical treatments such as Cancer, Diabetes, and HIV. These meals are delivered to those in need by AMOR's Delivery Angels every Friday. The Virginia Chapter of AAHAM, along with other National AAHAM chapters, have created a cookbook to support this wonderful organization. The cookbook features a selection of AMOR Healing Kitchen's recipes. Purchase yours today! Now, meet Maria Kelly, Founder of AMOR Healing Kitchen and former National Winner of Rachel Ray's Feed It Forward Competition!

Q. Tell us how AMOR Healing Kitchen was founded.

A. AMOR was founded in February 2018. I had been with my mom during her journey of a Colon cancer diagnosis and she was the one that instilled in me a love of cooking and healthy food. Growing up, no matter what we were doing or how busy everyone was, we always sat down together at the dinner table. I learned at an early age, that food connects us and heals us. I would often cook for my mom and take her food when she wasn't feeling well and I felt that was a little bit of comfort and strength that I could offer her during that time. I was a high school teacher in Charleston for 15 years so I have worked with youth for a long time and I know in my heart that they have so much to offer in shaping the future of our community. We have to include our youth and develop in them a sense of leadership, ownership and being connected (while being unplugged). When I learned about an organization in California that works with teens and serves people with health challenges, I just had this deep feeling of connection and that something similar could work in Charleston. We have an abundance of local, organic farms in our area and I believe that as a society getting back to the earth for our food will help cure us of so many of our chronic diseases. Once I started doing the research and really sitting with the idea, I knew it was something I had to do. Bringing people food in times of need is something we can all relate to. AMOR is bringing that to the table and offering it in a healthy way made with love.



Maria Kelly, Founder of AMOR Healing Kitchen

Q. How many people do you serve?

A. We average 25-30 clients and serve each one for a minimum of 12 weeks.

Q. How many teens do you estimate AMOR has mentored?

A. We have mentored approximately 60 teens.

AMOR Healing Kitchen Fundraiser (Continued)

Q. Name something about your journey that was pleasantly unexpected.

A. The fact that our volunteers for the most part, never leave! The level of dedication of service and belief in our Mission is extraordinary and I'm so grateful for their enthusiasm.

Q. What is one of your favorite recipes from the AAHAM Cooks! Cookbook?

A. Definitely the AMOR Amaze-balls! They are delicious, nutritious, easy to make, and a perfect treat!



Q. What is your favorite way to celebrate after you have completed a demanding project?

A. Start the next one.

Q. What lesson (s) have you learned from the pandemic?

A. Adaptability is the name of the game.

Q. What is your favorite way to connect to nature?

A. My morning routine of meditation for 10-15 min. in my backyard with the morning songbirds.

Q. How do you manage work/life balance? How is it important to you?

A. Extremely important. I will work really hard in order to maintain my time for traveling with my husband. I make sure to leave my phone in the car when I'm spending time with my friends, or leave my phone in the other room in the evening when I eat dinner and spend time with my husband. I also make sure to take one day a week where I don't log onto my email (usually Sundays).

Q. What is your favorite quote?

A. "Life shrinks or expands according to one's courage." I'm not sure who said it, but I try to live my life by these words.

Q. You have an unexpected day off. What do you do?

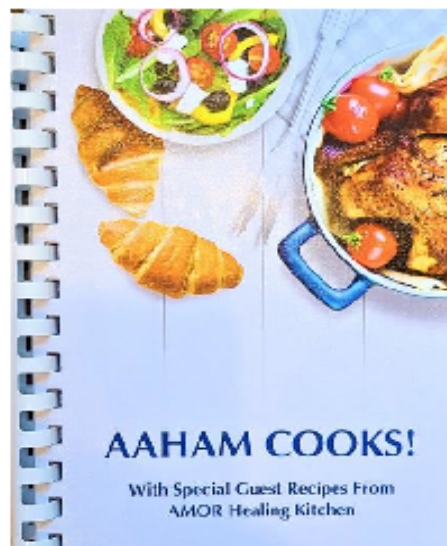
A. Surf when there are waves, work in my garden when there aren't.

Q. What might someone be surprised to know about you?

A. I will spontaneously bust into a dance party if there is a call for it.

Q. How can people donate to your cause?

A. Via our website www.amorhealingkitchen.org



The members of the Carolina, Georgia, Keystone, Maryland, Philadelphia, Three Rivers and Virginia Chapters of AAHAM along with AMOR culinary staff created the cookbook to support the AMOR Healing Kitchen. The cookbooks can be purchased at [AMOR Healing Kitchen's website.](http://www.amorhealingkitchen.org)

The Collections Industry Inflection Point: How AI is Driving Change

- Monday, 31 August 2020 15:17
- Written by Steel Rose

By Steve Kusic, CEO of NRA

In an industry where you're constantly finding a balance between empathy and profitability, the circumstances of 2020 have made our work more challenging than ever. With consumer debt skyrocketing, we've found ourselves in a unique position: striving to manage unprecedented call volume while balancing both the agent and customer experience.

What I've come to realize over the past few months is that digital initiatives that were once on the sidelines are now unavoidable. We've reached a turning point where technology—AI and automation in particular—have become essential to the way we do business.

For many, this realization isn't an easy one. There's a certain uneasiness associated with investing in technology that will transform the foundation of your business. In collections, contact centers are the focal point of operations, making any investment in this area both high risk and high reward. It's natural to start asking questions: Will AI get the job done right? Will it frustrate my customers? Will it add stress to employees who are already stretched thin?

This year, our company made the leap; we invested in an AI-powered Virtual Collection Agent (VCA) for our contact centers. I was hesitant at first, but throughout this process I've come to realize and appreciate the impact AI will have on not just us but on the industry as a whole. It's no longer an accessory or moonshot idea, it's a catalyst for driving the collections industry forward. Here's why:

AI can be your best agent at scale (and make your best agents even better)

One of the most powerful aspects of our new VCA, which is powered by [Interactions](#), is that it's advanced enough to operate like our best employee at scale.

The factors that contribute to any human performing at their absolute best are varied and vast. That's what makes AI indispensable; it will never wake up on the wrong side of the bed. It always shows up and performs, quite literally, to the best of its ability. This consistency is key to operational efficiency.

On top of that, a virtual agent can also offload transactional conversations, like sorting out wrong party contacts, from human agents, eliminating the need to hire additional workers to handle spikes in non-revenue generating calls. Meanwhile, shielding humans from these monotonous, sometimes frustrating conversations can boost their productivity and reduce churn—a [persistent challenge](#) in the collections space. With an AI-powered coworker, agents can focus on serving customers that need support in handling complex matters, driving profit while helping consumers ease financial pressures.

Customers often prefer to work with a virtual agent

Member Publication (Continued)

Beyond the clear impact on operational efficiency, there have been a number of studies showing the benefits of AI on customers. A recent Interactions survey found that [one in four](#) U.S. consumers prefer interacting with a virtual agent when dealing with uncomfortable financial information, and 70% of them are okay with bypassing a human agent when discussing personal finances.

When sensitive conversations comprise the bulk of contact center calls, research like this can't be ignored. We have to take into consideration the various possibilities for adjusting communications with customers to reach solutions that meet their individual needs.

Security concerns can be yesterday's problem

Importantly, and unlike conversations with humans, every interaction with a virtual agent is pre-defined and follows a specific flow that's compliant with our industry's various regulations.

If you consider the regulations at play in collections, such as the FDCPA regulating call times, the TCPA requiring expression of prior consent, or the FCRA regulating data collection, there's an enormous amount of complexity involved in each customer call. All of these policies are critical to the sanctity of our work, and failing to meet any one of them can be detrimental to collections agencies and the customers we serve. But with a virtual assistant pre-programmed to adhere to these guidelines, security concerns due to "slip ups" can become a thing of the past.

While I can't predict the future, I know the three primary challenges our industry faces—operational efficiency, customer experience and security—aren't going anywhere. Knowing AI & automation can help address these obstacles brings the industry to an inflection point; and you won't want to be on the other side of the curve.



Keystone AAHAM Webstore

We are pleased to announce that there are new items available in the Keystone AAHAM Webstore.

We recently added some fantastic new gear including sweatshirts, jackets and masks. All items contain the chapter logo. All orders include free shipping and will be sent directly to you. All merchandise can be found at

https://artisticimprints.3dcartstores.com/AAHAM_c_807.html

All proceeds from purchases will be donated to Ronald McDonald House Charities. The Keystone Chapter will be matching this amount, doubling the donation for Ronald McDonald House Charities. Any questions can be directed to our Ways and Means Chairperson Kristy Pipher Richmond at either kprichmond@commercialacceptance.net or 866-678-6855, ext. 214.

Thank you and enjoy shopping!



The graphic features a blue and pink background with geometric shapes. At the top left is the AAHAM logo (American Association of Healthcare Administrative Management). The main text reads 'KEYSTONE AAHAM NEW GEAR'. Below this is the website URL: 'Visit our webstore! • https://artisticimprints.3dcartstores.com/AAHAM_c_807.html'. A tilted black box displays four items of apparel: a light blue t-shirt, a red t-shirt, a white sweatshirt, and a dark jacket. To the right, it states 'ALL PROCEEDS DONATED TO' followed by the Ronald McDonald House Charities logo. Below that, it says 'AND MATCHED BY KEYSTONE AAHAM'. The bottom right corner has three vertical white bars.



Keystone AAHAM Board Members 2020-2021

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AAHAM

The only national organization dedicated exclusively to the revenue cycle

The American Association of Healthcare Administrative Management (AAHAM) is the premier professional organization in healthcare administrative management. Your one-stop resource center for information, education and advocacy in the areas of reimbursement, admitting and registration, data management, medical records, patient relations and so much more.

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