



# THE NORTHLINE

February 2002 Volume 1, Issue 1

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Cindy Fyfe, RHIT

I would like to thank the Board members for their vision for the AKHIMA's future. Each board member has devoted time to participate on various projects and committees. I would like to also thank the members who have participated on some of these committees for their time as well.

Last September our Board of Directors held a weekend retreat in Anchorage to plan the AKHIMA's direction. Realizing we need member input to make this meaningful, the Board developed and conducted a telephone survey of the general membership. The results are included in this newsletter.

One area we need to concentrate on is increasing revenue. We have very little in reserve. Suggested options for raising money included selling advertising on the website to non-resident facilities (Alaskan health care providers could still advertise for free), and hosting more coding workshops with an emphasis on hospital vs. physician office coding.

PayPal is being explored as a payment option on the website for members to pay annual dues and registration fees online. Posting of registration forms on the website has been successful and will continue.

AKHIMA has a post office box in Anchorage, and we hope to establish a modest office there to store Association materials, and eventually perhaps house a part-time employee to handle mail, SHAPER materials, maintain a library, etc.

Secure password access to the website's Alaska general membership list is also being researched. This would make it convenient for members to contact other Alaskan members without exposing the membership to unwanted solicitation. Our geographical distances and relative isolation makes the website a logical vehicle for much Association business. There members can stay current on issues, post jobs, and link to other relevant

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## ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE IS



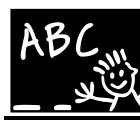
Plan now to attend the annual AKHIMA education conference and membership meeting.

April 24 - 26, 2002  
 Sheraton Anchorage Hotel  
 Anchorage, Alaska

Watch the website for updates  
[www.akhima.org](http://www.akhima.org)

### Presentations on

- Clinical topics
- Compliance
- Web remote coding
- And more...
- Vendors
- Silent auction
- Awards
- Coding
- Cancer Registry
- Legal updates



**SEE YOU THERE!!**

## MODIFICATIONS IN C.E. REQUIREMENTS

Ann M. Waters, RHIT, CCS



At the Annual meeting in October, the House of Delegates approved new credentials-maintenance requirements for the 2-year CE cycle. Since the purpose of the new structure was to put the CCS and CCS-P continuing education requirements on equal standing with the RHIT and RHIA, there was little opposition to the proposal.

- ⇒ Continuing education will be required to maintain all AHIMA-sponsored credentials. The number of credits necessary depends on the number and type of certification(s).
- ⇒ Self-assessment will be an option for RHIAs and RHITs
- ⇒ AHIMA will develop and make available a series of self-assessments on different topics for RHIAs and RHITs.
- ⇒ Self-assessments will continue to be required for CCSs and CCS-Ps
- ⇒ CE credit will be provided for all self-assessments
- ⇒ All individuals will have the same reporting cycle for each credential
- ⇒ The self-assessment provided to CCSs and CCS-Ps will continue to be provided annually and be worth 5 CE credits

Maintaining a credential requires commitment. These revisions took effect January 2002, or at the beginning of an individual's new CE cycle.

**RHIA:** 30 hours per 2-year cycle  
No self-assessment required.

**RHIT:** 20 hours per 2-year cycle  
No self-assessment required.

**CCS:** 20 hours per 2-year cycle,  
May include 10 CE for both annual assessments

**CCS-P:** 20 hours per 2-year cycle,  
May include 10 CE for both annual assessments

**CCS plus CCS-P:** 30 hours per 2-year cycle , may include 20 CE for all annual assessments

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AHIMA AUDIO SEMINARS



Go to a seminar...  
and be home for  
dinner!



AHIMA offers flexible continuing education opportunities through Audio Seminars. Each month, various topics are covered by knowledgeable HIM practitioners.

You can register to "attend" the live audio seminar, which gives you the opportunity to ask questions

OR you can order the cassette tape of the audio seminar, which gives you the opportunity to listen over (and over and over.)

These are GREAT for individual or group participation! For more information check out the AHIMA web site at

[www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org).

### UPCOMING AUDIO CONFERENCES

#### February 2002

- ⇒ Codeable Services for Outpatients
- ⇒ CPT Coding: Female System
- ⇒ Training the New Employee: HIM Professional
- ⇒ Advanced Respiratory Failure/Ventilation Coding

#### March 2002

- \* HCPCS Level II for Chargemaster
- \* Joint Commission Vs COP Relationships to Coding
- \* Pneumonia Coding Guidelines

#### April 2002

- ☞ HIV/AIDS Coding Guidelines
- ☞ ICD-9-CM for Home Health
- ☞ Advanced Neoplasm Diagnosis Coding
- ☞ Best Practices: Record Content Essential for Coding

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES



### QUALITY OFFICER

Central Peninsula General Hospital—Soldotna, Alaska  
Contact: Debi Honer in Human Resources  
907.262.8165 or dhoner@cpgh.org

### LEAD CODER—Full Time

#### CODER—Full Time

Fairbanks Memorial Hospital—Fairbanks, Alaska  
Contact: Nicole Welch in Human Resources  
907.458.5578 or nicole.welch@bannerhealth.com

### DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

Southeast Area Regional Health Corporation (SEARHC), Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital, Sitka, Alaska  
Contact: Human Resources 907.966.2411

### CODING SUPERVISOR (CCS or RHIT)

#### CODER

Bristol Bay Area Corporation, Dillingham, Alaska  
Contact Human Resources 907.842.5201

### HIM SUPERVISOR

Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center, Anchorage, AK  
Contact: Pat Mitchell in Human Resources 907.792.6562  
patriciam@anhc.org

### HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNICIAN

Cordova Medical Center, Cordova, Alaska  
Contact 907.424.8000

### CODER—CPT FOR RADIOLOGY

#### CODING ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR

Alaska Native Medical Center, Anchorage, AK  
Contact: Frances Maier at 907.729.3008 or Human Resources at 907.729.1301

### EXPERIENCED CODER

#### OR CODER-TRAINEE WITH MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY, PREFER ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY. Full time, with benefits

Maniilaq Health Center  
contact Renee Skeels @ rskeels@maniilaq.org or 907.442.7297

## NEWS BYTES

OLD MAC DONALD HAD A Q.I.O... E.I.E.I.O!  
(From *Modern Healthcare*, 12-10-01)

CMS (the agency formerly known as HCFA) has announced they have renamed the agencies overseeing quality of care for Medicare and Medicaid recipients.

The Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) were formerly known as Professional Review Organizations (PROs).

This change, and the new mission is cited in the "7th Contract Cycle Statement of Work (formerly known as "Scope of Work). This 7th scope of work will begin in August of 2002 for some QIOs.

According to the article, the expanded responsibilities of these QIOs will allow them to assess and impact the quality of care "delivered by nursing homes, home health-care providers and physician offices, in addition to hospitals."

2002 WORK PLAN FROM C.M.S.



Having trouble sleeping? Try this new remedy just out from Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services; *The 2002 OIG Work Plan*. Masterfully written, not for the faint at heart, this issue is full of intrigue and suspense, taking you to both familiar and new venues.

You can get to the 2002 Work Plan at [www.oig.hhs.gov/wrplan/index](http://www.oig.hhs.gov/wrplan/index).

**Sweet Dreams**

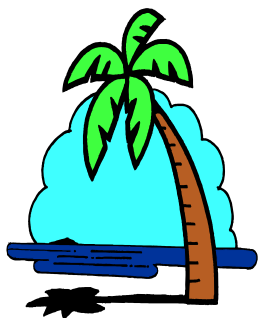
## COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Take a few minutes while surfing the net and go to the Communities of Practice (CoP) section on the AHIMA web site. You will find groups on compliance,

HIPAA, coding, and even geographical communities. Alaska has a specific Community of Practice facilitated by Janie Jenkins, RHIT (Soldotna). This technology allows you to post questions, note interesting links, schedule and have real time "chats", and send and receive internal e-mail.

Click on, click in and get going!





## Miami Nice: House of Delegates Report

Ann M. Waters, CCS

Sunny Miami was the site for the AHIMA's annual convention for 2001, held Oct. 13-17. The theme was "Return on Information."

I was pleased to see that almost three thousand Health Information professionals, undeterred by recent events, made the trip.

As always, the House of Delegates covered critical areas and decided key issues. Four sets of Standards were approved: the revised Standards for Maintenance of Certification for CCS, CCs-P, Standards for Maintenance of Certification for RHIA and RHIT, Standards for Initial Certification and Standards for Maintenance of Certification for the Entry-Level Coder (see related article).

The HoD also approved a resolution presented by the Tennessee State Health Information Management Association to address inconsistencies within the Conditions of Participation published by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (formerly known as HCFA), some portions of which conflict with existing standards published by JCAHO and recognized HIM standards of practice.

Announced just two days before the convention, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) reversed its decision regarding physician query forms. The forms, along with the rest of the medical record, may now be considered by PRO reviewers for purposes of DRG validation.

AHIMA's Executive Director Linda Kloss introduced Communities of Practice, a new internet feature designed to benefit members by providing them with a networking resource. Communities of Practice also allow us to share best practices, email colleagues, and check upcoming events.

With up to eight "educational tracks" per day, it was difficult to commit to just a few. Topics included presentations dealing with new technology and emerging issues; data quality and coding; management trends; ambulatory care, physician and hospital HIM; HIPAA and other government regulations; compliance updates; behavioral health and quality management.

Headline speakers included former "Second Lady" and mental health activist Tipper Gore, NAACP head Julian Bond, and Benjamin Zander, leader of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, who gave an inspirational presentation on "Unlocking your Passion."

Overall, it was an invigorating and informative week. I hope to see you at the next AHIMA national convention, scheduled for Sept. 21-26, 2002, in San Francisco.



## New Coding Credential: CCA

Ann M. Waters, CCS



AHIMA has just announced it will offer an entry-level coding credential, the *Certified Coding Associate (CCA)*. In all areas of healthcare, the market demand for coders has never been greater. In a June 2001 study conducted by the American Hospital Association, hospitals had 18% vacancies in coding. This percentage is larger than the more publicized RN shortage.

The proposal to create a new coding credential for entry-level professionals was the number one issue before the House of Delegates this year. As expected, it was a hotly debated issue.

The House of Delegates agreed with AHIMA's basic position on the issue; mainly, that this new credential will be a key strategy for retaining its status as industry experts and leaders in clinical coding. By offering a high quality entry-level certification and carefully positioning it alongside the coding credentials of CCS and CCS-P, and the RHIT and RHIA, AHIMA will be taking positive steps to continue its position as the leading health information organization.

This reinforces the importance of study in an HIM coding program, thereby strengthening the link between quality coding education and HIM. It brings new practitioners into the field, some of whom will continue their education to become RHITs and RHIAs and members of AHIMA. Finally, the revenue will assist AHIMA in supporting other programs that benefit coders and the HIM field in general. *(continued on next page)*

NEW CREDENTIAL, continued



The new Certified Coding Associate (CCA) credential is designed to give the coder immediate marketability after completing a qualified training program or on-the-job-training. After attaining the new credential, coders can demonstrate competency and thereby distinguish themselves from non-credentialed coders. Meanwhile, those who hold the CCS and CCS-P credentials will gain recognition as holders of advanced certifications.

AHIMA, prompted by an industry need to develop CCA, will offer the exam for the first time in September. CCA is based on job analysis standards and state-of-the-art test development and administration.

It is strongly recommended that candidates have at least 6 months experience in hospital inpatient and ambulatory care coding or have completed an AHIMA-approved program in coding. Earning a CCA is the first step in the **Coding Career Ladder** - it puts coding professionals on the path toward the mastery-level credentials of Certified Coding Specialist (CCS) and Certified Coding Specialist-Physician based (CCS-P).

## AKHIMA MEMBERSHIP POLL ESULTS

In September 2001, the Board held a retreat in Anchorage to set goals for AKHIMA. Our immediate goal was to find out what members expected from the Association and what we as a Board could do to meet member expectations. The Board wants to thank all of the members for taking time to respond to our questions.

Board members contacted those listed on the AKHIMA membership list. Unfortunately, due to incorrect demographic data, we were able to contact only 32 members. Please update your information on the AHIMA site and notify our treasurer as well. Brenda Donohue can be reached via the website [www.akhima.org](http://www.akhima.org). AHIMA also sends out lists of current national members from Alaska.

The following questions were asked:

Q Are you a current member of AKHIMA?

A 20 were members, 5 were not, and 6 did not know.

Q What are your expectations from the association?

A Improved newsletters, mentoring, networking, professional development, member support, education, technical support, seminars on compliance, HIPAA, coding, performance improvement, utilization review, and more communication between board and general membership.

Q How can we provide professional support and development?

A Seminars, mentor new members, current website, list job openings in state, keep members updated, state forum (COP, teleconferencing, workshops, chat rooms with set times for chats and topics, keeping members updated coding, compliance, HIPAA, and networking.

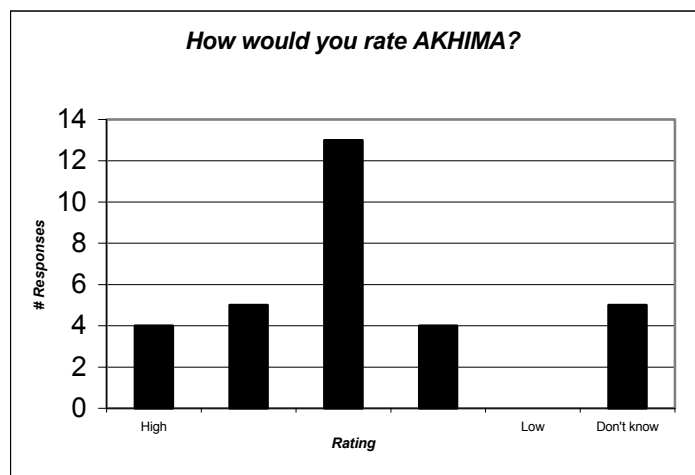
Q Would you be willing to serve in any capacity?

A 8 said yes, 8 said no, 6 said occasionally if they were interested in topic, and 10 stated they did not know.

Q What would you like to see at the next annual meeting?

A Supervisory training, legal information, HIPAA, telemedicine, critical access, mental health issues, APC and reimbursement issues, credentialing, coding, how to use the WEB, utilizing coding clinic, workplace issues such as shortage of coders, recruitment and retention financial management, utilization review, performance improvement, outsource options, "home based coding, is it a realistic option", pre-conference workshops on coding, HIPAA, compliance, APC's and JCAHO.

(continued on page 6)



## AKHIMA MEMBERSHIP POLL RESULTS

*(continued from page 5)*

The results of this survey helped us set goals to better meet member needs.

- ▶ A “How to Implement HIPAA” training was held at Providence Hospital in November.
- ▶ The website has been current with job postings in Alaska.
- ▶ We will charge for non-Alaskan facilities to advertise jobs.
- ▶ Legislative updates are posted.
- ▶ The annual meeting in Anchorage will have many topics that members said would help them in their jobs. In the planning stages are coding workshops to be held in various locations throughout the state. These workshops will differentiate between physician office and hospital based coding.

The goal of a timely newsletter has not been met. This is primarily due to lack of volunteers. Marianne Dailey and Jeani Mountain have agreed to head up this effort. Please contact them if you have any future articles or wish to assist. The AKHIMA Board is interested in knowing your needs and hearing your ideas— please do not hesitate to contact any board member. Our contact information is on the website. This is your association and your input is extremely valuable in planning for the future.

## President’s Message, continued

*(Continued from page 1)*

sites. Feel free to contact the web mistress with suggestions. The website has great networking potential for the Association.

Survey respondents also suggested that we undertake more networking and mentoring of students.

In his State of the Union address Jan. 29, President Bush called on every American to commit two years “to the service of your neighbors and your nation.”

My call to you is to volunteer some of that time to strengthening AkHIMA.

Your Board can’t do it alone. We need input from new and established members, and more volunteers. Sign up for a committee, or contact a board member with ideas and let us know where you can help. Our Association is only as effective as all of us make it.

Cindy Fyfe, RHIT



Annual AKHIMA education conference and membership meeting.

April 24 - 26, 2002  
Sheraton Anchorage Hotel  
Anchorage, Alaska

Watch the website for updates



AKHIMA CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2002-2003 BALLOT

For the year 2002-2003, AKHIMA is seeking nominations for the following  
President-Elect      Secretary      First-Year Director  
Members of the 2002-2003 Nominating Committee  
AKHIMA DISTINGUISHED MEMBER Award

Completed Nomination Forms Must Be Returned To Barbara Norbeck  
Postmarked No Later Than 3-10-2002  
Mail: c/o Dena'ina Health Clinic - 416 Frontage Road - Kenai, AK 99611  
Fax: (907) 283-2289

TO QUALIFY TO HOLD OFFICE IN THE ALASKA HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION, NOMINEE MUST

1. Be an Active member in good standing in AKHIMA.
2. Have three (3) years recent experience in the medical field.
3. For the office of President-Elect: The nominee must have served in an elected office within the previous five (5) years. Nominees for President-Elect shall not have served as President during the previous five (5) years.

**DUTIES**

**PRESIDENT-ELECT:** The president-elect shall serve as Delegate to the national meeting, and shall perform all duties of the President in his/her absence or inability to act. Following this term, the President-Elect will continue serving the AKHIMA Board of Directors as President (1 year) then as Past-President (1 year).

**SECRETARY:** The secretary shall keep a permanent record of meetings of the association and of the Board of Directors, and shall be responsible for all official correspondence of this association under the direction of the president.

**DIRECTOR:** The director in the first year of a two-year term shall serve as Co-Chair of the Program Committee, shall be introduced to the activities of and act in a supporting role to the AKHIMA Board. This individual will then move into the Second-Year Director position.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** The Nominating Committee consists of three association members elected by the membership each association year. This committee shall solicit names to fill Board vacancies and to identify candidates for the Distinguished Member Award, and shall develop a ballot, receive and tally votes, and report results to the Board and Membership at the Annual Membership meeting.

**DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD**

**GOAL:** To identify and honor members of the Alaska Medical Record Association for loyal service to the Association and contributions to the profession.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Nominees must be members in good standing of AHIMA and AKHIMA.

**NOMINATIONS:** Items to be considered for nominees are:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Association activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Offices held
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committees served	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participation at meetings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teaching activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contributions to the health record field
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Loyalty, unselfish motivations and dedication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other community contributions

**CANDIDATE NOMINATION FORM**  
**Please Complete One Form Per Nomination**  
**(PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY)**

**NOMINATION FOR AKHIMA OFFICE:**

Mark the appropriate nomination type:

I/we wish to nominate the following individual for the position checked below.

Has this nominee been contacted about this recommendation?    Yes                       No

Has this nominee agreed to this nomination?                      Yes                       No

Self Nomination: I am interested in volunteering for the position(s) checked below. I have read the duties and responsibilities of this/these position(s).

President-Elect

Director (2 year term)

Secretary (2 year term)

AKHIMA Nominating Committee

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Credential(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**NOMINATION FOR AKHIMA DISTINGUISHED MEMBER**

I wish to recommend the following individual be considered for the Alaska Health Information Management Association Distinguished Member Award.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Credential(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**INFORMATION TO SUPPORT NOMINATION:**

State any facts that may demonstrate this individual's qualifications for either

AKHIMA office

AKHIMA Distinguished Member award

Include contributions made to the AKHIMA, AHIMA, or to the health care industry in general, educational background, publications, other awards received, etc. (use back of form if additional room is needed)

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Nomination Submitted By \_\_\_\_\_

Completed Nomination Forms Must Be Returned To Barbara Norbeck Postmarked No Later Than 3-10-2002

Mail: c/o Dena'ina Health Clinic - 416 Frontage Road - Kenai, AK 99611

Fax: (907) 283-2289

