



The Monitor

From Your President

Happy New Year everyone! I hope you enjoyed the day and are looking forward to a better 2018! I know that I am.

The Board has been working behind the scenes with our management company trying to get our new web pages up and running for the conference. As in our past, online registration will be available. The conference lineup will be more evident along with the planned activities. Theresa Crothers is our Program Chair has lined up a pretty fantastic program.

The rest of the website will be revised and updated with new technology. Our old/current website requires a programmer and a computer code that isn't supported anymore by the more common browsers like Edge or Chrome. The new technology will allow users, (designated Board Members) to update content on the fly and add content that is created in common software packages like Microsoft Word. It's been a struggle to move in this direction, but we're slowly getting there.

With this New Year comes the new tax bill that in one way or the other will affect all of us. If the predictions are true, and millions upon millions of Americans will be tossed off their health plans, then the industry we work in, regardless if you are a Payer or Provider, will be affected. What no one seems to be saying is that the Americans who now will be joining the uninsured category will still seek healthcare and continue to flood emergency rooms. That puts a burden on the provider to at least perform the initial screening and treatment. The provider's reimbursement for these "cash" patients plummets. The charitable care costs grow exponentially. The provider, in order to stay solvent, shifts costs to patients who have insurance by raising their prices to help defray the new found debt the provider is in. Payers will feel a cost rise in their claims paid and a reduction in premiums that they were getting from people who once had a health plan under the affordable care act. Their action is to raise premiums on their patients to help defray their newfound expense in paying these claims. It's true that the Payer will not be paying on some claims of the people thrown off their health plan, but the savings is considered to be marginal. No one wins in this scenario.

This has happened throughout the history of health care in our country. If you've been around long enough, like me you've seen this before during the Regan years. What does this all mean for our members? From a business standpoint, I think it's an opportunity for auditors to increase their value to the industry and open new opportunities for audit.

We've seen the number of traditional audits go down as technology is created to automatically bill, screen and adjudicate claims. This works until it doesn't. It has never worked well on more complicated claims with various levels of care and multiple procedures. Most of the technology relies heavily on the coding assigned

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From Your President (continued)

on the claim and whatever DRG fits best. Healthcare auditors with a decent clinical background can find errors on claims and help providers retain the revenue they rightfully deserve and also educate both provider and payer on how to correctly bill or pay a claim. There are many areas in the charge claim generation through payment process that auditors like us can find opportunities.

We all know that even though we were taught as care givers the patient comes first in reality we also know that somehow that it needs to be paid for. This is the challenge CFOs are faced with from the provider. On the provider side, auditors can be helpful to their CFO by pointing out charge pathway errors, discovering where revenue is lost. For the payers, auditors can screen a claim and show their bosses when things are not billed in the most correct way and when and what to deny payment. All of these activities save each side the much needed revenue. Again automation is a great improvement, but it is only as good as the programmer who programmed it. Automation is extremely expensive, but so are people. *Updated versions of technology are expensive; auditors can be updated much more cheaply by investing in workshops and conferences like AAMAS.*

Many years ago in a hospital system far, far away, the nuns I worked for invested into technology with the thought of reducing the financial staff. They were very progressive in their thinking at the time, but as the volume increased with automation, they needed bodies to handle what the new automation could not. They didn't reduce staff but instead maintained and eventually increased staff in the financial department.

I would invite you all to contribute to the newsletter with your experiences and new niches you've found in our industry. Also, share something about yourself. I have done so in my articles for the past two years. You all know I'm a Christmas-aholic, and I have 14 trees decorated. They are still up!

Also in the news, Flu is everywhere in this country. I hope you're all taking care of yourselves, drinking lots of fluids, covering your mouths when coughing or sneezing and washing your hands a lot! My house has been healthy, knock on wood. Clinicians are great at taking care of others but stink when it comes to caring of ourselves.

I'm looking forward to seeing many old friends and making new ones at this year's conference. See you all in Salt Lake!

David Eklof
AAMAS President

A Message From Your President-Elect

Greetings all,

Commitment makes things happen in this world. Without it, ideas slip away into fantasy and creation fails. We've all experienced life when we're committed to making something work, and those times when our energy is low and survival seems to be a stretch. The former is life affirming, and the latter is depressing.

There is a new commitment in the AAMAS Board of Directors. It has been growing and taking on strength over the last two years, led by chairperson David Eklof and assisted by Board Members Theresa Crothers, Anne Haider, Amy Armstrong, Teresa VanHout and lastly by me who just joined the Board.

The Commitment is to revitalize AAMAS—to restore it to the days of its glory when networking and learning and working together offered more than educational requirements. Many of us found lifelong friends and opportunities for advancement through our professional Association. We want that back. We hope to bring back exhibitors and old friends. Many of the founding members of AAMAS—over 20 years ago—will be back to enjoy the Salt Lake City Conference in April.

We also intend to bring new ideas and technologies and classes to you. We want to increase our membership to any who are interested in medical audit and reimbursement. You are encouraged to communicate to us what your professional needs are. We will never be a coding Association—there are other Associations meeting that need. The AAMAS Board will continue to strive for excellence in the general medical audit community.

The AAMAS Board is working diligently to untangle issues around the CMAS exam and the certification Board of Directors. You'll be hearing more about that later this year. Meanwhile, the exam will be proctored in SLC at the April conference.

The AAMAS Board is working diligently with the Certification Council for Medical Auditors (CCMA) to establish better communication regarding testing and recertification for our members, and to ensure that the CMAS exam remains a valuable benchmark of professional knowledge in the audit community.

Hoping that you received our Holiday postcard, that you had a blessed Holiday season and that we will see one another in SLC this April.

Sincerely,

Mary Jane LaBelle
AAMAS President-elect

A Message From Your Vice President

In the last 6 months I changed positions within my facility. I went from being an internal auditor to now working in utilization review. I was an auditor for 6 years, and I absolutely loved it. When I first entered the auditing world, I did not realize how much experience I would gain working as an auditor. I use my auditing skills every day while working in the utilization review department.

I never thought I would actually miss a job, but I do miss working as an auditor at times. It is a great field to be in, and it opens so many opportunities for future jobs.

The board is very excited for the 2018 conference in Salt Lake City. The annual conferences are a great place to network with other auditors. Past conferences have helped me to strengthen my auditing skills and have helped to reinforce some of my current practices and have also helped to identified practices that could be modified to help strengthen my skills.

I would like to encourage everyone to be an active member within AAMAS. There will be board elections this year, and it is a great opportunity. It is an absolute joy being on the board and has been an amazing experience. Everyone on the board has been an absolute pleasure to work with. It is a very dedicated group, and they are striving to make AAMAS even greater. I was a little intimidated when I first ran, but time has flown by, and it is hard to believe my term is coming to an end. I hope to see everyone at this year's conference!

Anne Haider
AAMAS Vice President

A Message From Your Treasurer

Happy 2018 Everyone! Sometimes it is mind blowing how fast the time flies. It is hard to believe that I have been on the board for three years now. I have really enjoyed my time as Treasurer/ Secretary. I am going to be sad to leave, but I am also glad that someone else can experience the opportunity to serve on the board. If you have ever considered a board position I'll let you in on a little secret- my position is one of the best ones. It sound impressive with two titles, but is not double the work. You have a lot of support from our management company. They keep the books and take notes at the board meetings. Monthly spending has to be reviewed and a budget made. A presentation of the yearly financials has to be presented at the annual conference. If you are interested in serving on the board, don't hesitate to contact me to answer any questions. The friends you make and knowledge gained is invaluable.

A big expense we had this year was spending for a new website. It was way overdue. The old ones caused problems all around. We were hoping to have it complete by the first of the year, but we are not there yet. The new conference page is a sample of what is to come. A fresh and updated site! By getting multiple bids and negotiating back and forth, I feel the price we paid is both fair and fiscally responsible to our members. Let us know your thought when it is complete.

Hope to see you all in Salt Lake City- Amy.

Amy Armstrong
AAMAS Treasurer

Upcoming Conference

Plans for the 2018 conference are final, and registration will be available soon. We have another very strong program that I think will address many of the issues we are facing in the healthcare reimbursement field. As Dave stated in his article, workshops and conferences provide the medical auditor with in-depth education and skills to advance their knowledge, and keep current with legislation/trends.

I am very excited that we are offering **4 excellent preconference workshops** scheduled for Tuesday, April 24 and Wednesday, April 25.

Shannon DeConda of NAMAS and Doctors Management will be teaching an all day workshop on **Coding for E&M**.

Mary Jane LaBelle and Dave Eklof of Escalante will be teaching **Advanced Medical Bill Auditing**. This course will be an all day workshop for those wanting to expand their knowledge of medical bill auditing.

Sharon Weston, former owner of Nurse Audit, Inc., and Debbie Reid of Think Healthcare Solutions will be presenting back-to-back sessions on **entrepreneurs in the medical audit field**. Sharon will be addressing **lessons learned as a nurse entrepreneur**, and Debbie will follow with a session on the **business of auditing**.

Mary Correa, RN, BSN, CMAS will be presenting a workshop on **Introduction to Hospital-Payer Contracts**.

These workshops will provide skills to help you broaden your medical audit career, and are a great adjunct to the conference. I am confident these workshops will be of great benefit to your audit practice. Please note: **the deadline for Pre-Conference Registration will be March 20th. If we do not have enough registrants, the sessions will be cancelled.**

As I stated in the last newsletter, we are pleased to announce that **Day Egusquiza of AR Systems, Inc. will be our Key Note Speaker**. Many of you have heard Day speak at previous conferences and know what she has to offer. She will be presenting two sessions on Top Audit Findings with Charge Capture and Managed Care Denials.

The other topics that will be addressed are Medicaid Fraud and Abuse, the Opioid Crisis, EMTALA, the use of Telemedicine, Workers Compensation, Audit Process for Inpatient CDI Provider Queries, Auditing Inpatient Rehab Facilities to Avoid Non-Compliance, ED Coding, and Real Time Discussion of Current Audit Issues.

Our opening reception looks to be a fun evening, with the theme of "Denim and Diamonds". You may remember this theme from the AAMAS conference in Nashville, so dig out those denim shirts and diamond tiaras! We have also made plans for a group dinner at the Hogle Zoo: <https://www.hoglezoo.org/>. We will be having a buffet dinner and will be honoring the founding and long-term members of AAMAS. The cost of this will be included in the conference registration, and transportation to and from the zoo will be provided. Additional tickets for guests may be purchased separately.

We hope to have the brochure on the website soon for registration and hotel reservation information.

I look forward to seeing you in Salt Lake!

Theresa Crothers

AAMAS Education Committee Chair

Thank You Members!

Thank you for your continued support of the American Association of Medical Audit Specialists. AAMAS is the leading healthcare organization dedicated to serving the needs of the healthcare medical auditor. We would like to encourage you to continue to recognize the many benefits and opportunities that your membership in AAMAS offers you and renew your membership today.

Membership is good for you!

Here are just a few of the benefits available to you as a member:

- Annual Conference that focuses on what you need: Medical Audit Education and continuing education credits (Many great topics and the opportunity to learn about new areas for medical auditors.)
- Preconference workshops focused on building or expanding your audit skills, knowledge and employability
- Opportunity to become a Certified Medical Audit Specialist (CMAS) which expands your knowledge base and employment opportunities
- Networking with peers and colleagues in the medical audit community. Find out what is happening in medical audits in other parts of the country. Be sure to retain your contacts at conference for later reference. Let's help each other out!

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- Long lasting friendships in your field – many auditors work alone or without auditor peers in their places of work. Come to the conferences and experience some camaraderie. Don't miss our special anniversary plans at conference this year – it will be fun!
- The Monitor, AAMAS quarterly newsletter, presenting Association highlights. You may access past issue online in the members-only area under Newsletter Archives.
- The members-only sections of the AAMAS website are password protected and allow members to modify their records, renew membership, register for meetings, and more! (Forgot your log-in credentials or having trouble? Call the AAMAS office at 414-908-4941 ext. 116 for help.)
- NEW! Check out our Facebook page – this is a closed group for members only to post. You can see pictures of Salt Lake City and Little America Hotel. You'll be able to hop on the tram to get to the Hotel. Just log in to Facebook and request to be added. Find us at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1608284755904926>
- COMING SOON! The board has contracted for a new website! Watch for updates and progress.

It's an exciting time to be a member – be sure to renew, and we will help each other in our work lives, advance our career goals and make longtime friendships in your field.

Thanks for all you do!

Terese VanHout RN, BSN, CMAS, CPC
AAMAS Membership/Nomination chair



AAMAS WANTS YOU!

Call For Nominations

This is a Call for Nominations to fill vacancies on the AAMAS Board of Directors expected in 2018.

Positions opening are:

- Vice President (currently Anne Haider RN, CMAS)
- Secretary-Treasurer (currently Amy Armstrong RN, CMAS)

What's in it for you?

1. Help your non-profit association! Your contributions ensure a strong future
2. Advance your professional and leadership skills
3. Discounted Conference registration fees, travel reimbursement
4. Preceptorship/Guidance from a sage board - you are not alone!
5. Grow your audit scope, knowledge and network
6. The fun of working with a group of energetic and dynamic leaders in the field of Medical Auditing
7. Nominations of yourself or others are encouraged
 - Members are ineligible to hold an elected position until they have been a member of the Association for two years. Members shall have attended at least one annual meeting.

Descriptions of the positions are found on the website and are included for your convenience as follows:

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Vice-President: 2-year term

The Vice-President shall, in the temporary absence or incapacity of the President, perform the duties of the President. The Vice-President shall succeed to the office of President in the event of a vacancy in the office of President. The Vice-President shall perform such other duties as may be requested by the Board of Directors. The Vice President shall serve as the Chair of the Bylaws/Standards Committee.

Secretary/Treasurer: 2-year term

The Secretary/Treasurer shall be the recording officer of the assembly and the custodian of its records, except those specifically assigned to other persons. The Secretary/Treasurer shall make the minutes and records available to members upon request. The Secretary/Treasurer shall cause all necessary notices to be directed to the members of the Association, conduct and maintain a record of all official correspondence. The Secretary/Treasurer shall perform other functions at the direction of the Board of Directors. The Secretary/Treasurer shall maintain a record of all receipts and disbursements of the Association and oversee the maintenance of records of all receipts and disbursements of the Association. The Secretary/Treasurer shall monitor the receipt and deposit of all monies of the Association in a bank account approved by the Board of Directors and provide an up to date financial statement to each meeting of the Board of Directors or at the request of the President. An annual financial statement shall be presented at the annual business meeting along with an audit approved by the Board of Directors.

Thank you for being a member of AAMAS, and we look forward to serving with you to lead us into the future!

Terese VanHout RN, CMAS
Nominating/Membership Committee Chair
Michigan

Chris Payne Bryant RN
Committee Member
Indiana

Karen Sedevie RT, CMAS
Committee Member
North Dakota

It's time to renew!

Don't worry – there's still a little time – do it today before it slips your mind! Renew now with no penalty!

Some things to remember

Bring a friend! Use the membership referral program AAMAS gift certificates will be awarded to members who refer new members! The amount of the gift certificate will be determined by how many new members are referred:

- \$50 for 2 new members;
- \$100 for 4 new members;
- \$150 for 5 or more new members.
- The awards are non-transferable and must be redeemed within one (1) years of date of receipt. This gift certificate can be used toward the cost of your renewal and toward the conference!
- The recipient must be an active member of AAMAS.

Discounted Corporate Rate Membership

- For organizations that have 3 or more individuals that would like to be members.
- Each membership receives a 10% discount off of the individual membership rate.

Renewal Information

- For your convenience, you can renew your membership today by visiting the AAMAS Website at <https://www.AAMAS.org/renew.taf>.
- Can't renew online? Download, print, fax or mail your application. (See renewal application at the end of the newsletter.)
- Would you rather call? Contact the AAMAS Membership, Finance and Customer Care Departments at (414) 908-4941 or by e-mail at AAMAS_membership@aamas.org.
- Having trouble? Please contact Nicole Cheever - AAMAS Membership Manager, P: (414) 908-4941 ext. 116, F: (414) 768-8001, Email: n.cheever@aamas.org
- Still having trouble? Contact our AAMAS Customer Care team at (414) 908-4941 ext. 450 or by e-mail at CustomerCare@aamas.org.

Thank you for your continued support.

Terese VanHout RN, BSN, CMAS, CPC
AAMAS Membership/nomination chair

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Eklof, *President*

Mary Jane LaBelle, *President Elect*

Anne Haider, *Vice President*

Amy Armstrong, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Theresa Crothers, *Education Committee Chair*

Teresa VanHout, *Nomination's Committee Chair*

Mike McManus, *Executive Director*



**AAMAS New
Executive Director**

Mike McManus

ext. 119



Liz Kutz

**Chief Financial
Officer at Association
Executives Group**

ext. 102

Vice President of Operations at Association Executives Group

Mike attended Seton Hall University, where he majored in marketing and was a member of the varsity golf and basketball teams. Mike has held a variety of management positions throughout his career, including a Director position with Tiffany & Co. and as general manager with the world's largest Minuteman Press organization. He also has more than 10 years of nonprofit Board and event management experience. He has held the position of Executive Director for eight associations during his career.



Roy Smith

**Vice President of
IT at Association
Executives Group**



Nicole Cheever

**AAMAS Customer
Care & Membership
Manager**
ext. 116

The opinions expressed in The Monitor are those of the authors or persons quoted.
They do not necessarily reflect the views of the AAMAS Board of Directors.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL AUDIT SPECIALISTS

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Phone 414.908.4941 • Fax 414.768.8001

www.aamas.org



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL AUDIT SPECIALISTS Membership Application

Please Print Clearly:

Name: Dr./ Mrs. / Mr. / Ms. _____ Date: _____

Title: _____ Credentials: _____

Affiliation: _____

Preferred mailing address: Home Business

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

Home phone number: _____ Office Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Fax number: _____ E-mail: _____

Referred by: _____

MEMBERSHIP DUES SCHEDULE: Each membership is good for one full-year.

Individual Membership \$125.00 \$_____ Membership Total

Corporate Membership If three or more employees from the same organization join/renew, they each receive the discounted rate noted below. Please provide names and contact information on the back of this form.

Total Number of Members: _____ X \$112.50 = \$_____ Membership Total

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Please list other professional organizations to which you belong: _____

EMPLOYMENT SETTING

- Hospital
- Vendor
- Insurance Company/Other Payer
- Other

JOB CLASSIFICATION

- Auditor
- UR/QA
- Case Manager
- Other

BIRTH YEAR

- Prior to 1925
- 1925-1945
- 1946-1964
- 1965-1979
- 1980-2000
- After 2000

Your name, address, and email address will automatically appear in our online membership directory available only to members. Please check if you would like your name ***withheld*** from the online membership directory:

PAYMENT INFORMATION:

Check/Money Order Visa MasterCard American Express Discover

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Name on Card: _____ CVV Code: _____

Signature: _____

Return this form with your payment. Checks or money orders (in U.S. dollars) payable to AAMAS.

7044 S 13th St.

Oak Creek, WI 53154, USA Tel: 414-908-4941

Credit Card Payments can be faxed to AAMAS at **414-768-8001**.

TOTAL DUE: _____

Please FAX or MAIL
your application form to the
address at left. Or, you may join
online at www.aamas.org.