

# In & About

The Official Newsletter of the Massachusetts Association of Patient Account Management, an Affiliate of AAHAM



December 2024

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**Check Out Our 2024 Sponsors Found in the Newsletter!**

## President's Message

Dear MAPAM Members,

As we approach the end of the year, I find myself reflecting on the incredible journey we've shared during my term as president. This will be my last letter to you in this capacity, and I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for your support and dedication.

The holiday season is upon us—a time for reflection, gratitude, and connection with loved ones. It's a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our achievements and the bonds we've built within our community. I encourage each of you to take a moment to appreciate what we've accomplished together this year and to look forward to what lies ahead.

I want to remind you of our upcoming Government Payer and Holiday Meeting on December 12<sup>th</sup> at the Beechwood Hotel in Worcester, MA. This is not just another meeting; it's an important gathering where we will conduct the 2025 Officer elections for MAPAM. Your participation is crucial, as the future of our organization relies on your voices and votes.

In addition to the officer elections, we will have valuable government payer updates, a festive holiday luncheon, and an exciting ugly sweater contest to celebrate the season! Whether you're able to attend in person or not, please keep an eye out for an email that will provide details on how to cast your virtual vote if you are unable to join us.

As I reflect on this past year, I am filled with gratitude for the hard work and dedication of our board members and webmaster. They have tirelessly committed their time and energy to ensure our success, and I would like to acknowledge them:

- Jon Menard, Past President and Education
- Timothy Hall, Vice President and Education
- Stephanie Clark, Treasurer and Newsletter
- Jennifer Bernatchez, Secretary and Social Media
- Tanya Thorpe, Sponsorship
- John Giunta, Sponsorship
- Louise Tokman, Membership
- Sandra Magaw, Audit & By-Laws

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- Chris Healy, Certification
- Tricia Stephen, Membership and Sponsorship
- Patrick McDonough, Webmaster

Your commitment and passion have driven our organization forward, and I am grateful for each of you. Together, we navigated challenges, celebrated successes, and laid the groundwork for a brighter future for MAPAM.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to share that the National organization has scheduled the ANI for 2025, which will take place in Baltimore, MD, from October 20-22, 2025. Mark your calendars for this important event as we continue to grow and learn together. It promises to be an enriching experience filled with valuable insights and networking opportunities.

As I close this chapter, I want to wish you all a joyful holiday season filled with peace, happiness, and cherished moments with family and friends. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president. I look forward to seeing many of you at the December meeting and continuing to support MAPAM in the years to come.

Warmest regards,  
Makayla Hussey  
MAPAM President

## Some Payers are Hitting the Snooze Button on 2-Midnight Rule: Report Becker's Healthcare By: Andrew Cass

Kodiak Solutions said its analysis of hospital inpatient and outpatient claims data suggests that payers are "continuing to apply their own criteria for inpatient admission and dismissing the two-midnight rule for Medicare beneficiaries."

The firm analyzed claims data from more than 1,900 hospitals between July 2023 and June 2024, according to the report. The analysis compares observation rates prior to and following the January 2024 implementation of the two-midnight rule for Medicare Advantage plans. Kodiak analyzed data for three health plan categories: commercial/managed care, Medicare Advantage and traditional Medicare.

The data shows that Medicare Advantage plans began classifying fewer observation stays starting in January, according to an Oct. 23 Kodiak news release. Observation rates for MA plans ranged between 18.1% and 20.2% of claims in the last six months of 2023, then fluctuated within a lower range of 14.4% and 16.1% in the first six months of 2024.

Observation rates in traditional Medicare also trended down over the 12-month period, but within a range of 5.2% to 3.7%, with the exception of a spike to 8.5% in December, according to the release.

"The gap in observation rates between MA plans and traditional Medicare suggests that MA plans are not fully complying with the federal rule requiring MA plans to offer members the same coverage as traditional Medicare," Kodiak's director of revenue cycle Matt Szaflarski said in the release. "Our data show the MA observation rates are similar to the rates among patients covered by commercial insurance and, of course, most of the MA plans are also providers of commercial insurance."

Mr. Szaflarski said that hospitals need to closely monitor payer behaviors regarding observation stays across all lines of business. Hospitals should reinforce their denial management practices to "ensure that documentation and case reviews are optimized to reduce the opportunity for MA plans to reclassify claims as observation visits." He added that revenue cycle leaders should also be on the lookout for the worst examples of these reclassifications to share with their advocacy organizations.

Read the full report [here](#).

## MAPAM's Comic Corner

### DOC-RELATED



Dr. Peter Valenzuela

## Announcements from National AAHAM

### Plan to attend ANI 2025

Save the date for ANI 2025. This not-to-be-missed event will be in Baltimore, MD October 20- October 22, 2025.

### EHR contact for CEUs

Previously, EHR content was not accepted for CEU submissions. However, we have updated our policy to now accept EHR courses that include revenue cycle content, though system-specific training remains ineligible. If you submitted an EHR course with revenue cycle content that was denied, please contact Cindi Poole at [cpoole@aaham.org](mailto:cpoole@aaham.org) for assistance in correcting your CEU records. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

### Approved CEUs vs. Denied CEUs

To provide guidelines for recertification and CEU submission, The Certification Committees have drafted the following questions a certificant can ask themselves to assist in determining whether or not a submission will be accepted:

Is this an AAHAM-sponsored event? (Automatically accepted) Yes or No - If "Yes" the course is automatically accepted; additional questions are not needed. If "No", it may still be accepted; move to the next question.

- Was this professional development? Yes or No - If "Yes" move to the next question. If "No", it is automatically not accepted.
- Was it related to the revenue cycle OR to ethics, DEI, or leadership within the workplace? Yes or No - If "Yes" move to the next question. If "No", it is automatically not accepted.
- Is the learning transferable to a role at another institution? Yes or No - If "Yes" move to the next question. If "No", it is automatically not accepted
- Is the session at least 15 minutes or longer? Yes or No - If "Yes" The session will more than likely be accepted. If "No", it is automatically not accepted.

### Please remember to keep your membership and CEUs up to date

We want to remind you of the importance of staying current with your membership and CEUs.

By keeping your membership and CEUs up to date, you'll ensure your credentials remain active and continue to reflect your professional excellence. To avoid any interruptions, simply log your CEUs as you earn them.

If you need help with membership renewal, our membership coordinator, David Grimm, is available at [dgrimm@aaham.org](mailto:dgrimm@aaham.org). For any assistance with submitting or viewing CEUs, please contact our certification coordinator, Cindi Poole, at [cpoole@aaham.org](mailto:cpoole@aaham.org).

Even though the recertification form can only be submitted within six months of your certification's expiration, you can log your CEUs at any time. Doing so ensures a smooth recertification process without the last-minute rush.

### Enhancing Our Certification Process: New Fee Structure and Benefits for Members

At AAHAM, we are always striving to improve our processes and provide better support to our members. As part of our ongoing efforts to streamline certification and make exam administration more efficient, we are introducing a few updates to our fee structure that reflect the growing demand for certification services and the additional resources required to ensure a smooth experience for all test-takers.

**Rescheduling Fees with Consideration for Extenuating Circumstances**

We understand that life can be unpredictable. While we always strive to accommodate test takers, we've found that rescheduling exams without a reasonable cause places an increased administrative burden on our certification team. After thoughtful discussion, each committee has agreed that to encourage candidates to stick with their scheduled exam date, a nominal rescheduling fee will be introduced for those who do not have an extenuating need. Of course, exceptions will be made in cases of unforeseen extenuating circumstances. This fee allows us to focus our resources more effectively on candidates and helps maintain exam schedules.

**Rush Scheduling Fee for Expedited (fewer than 30 days) Certification Requests**

We are also introducing a rush scheduling fee to accommodate members who need immediate certification and require expedited scheduling. This will ensure that we can meet urgent requests in a timely manner while covering the additional administrative time and effort required to prioritize and fast-track these certifications. This option is designed to give you flexibility when certification is critical to your career advancement, while still maintaining the integrity of our regular scheduling process.

**Encouraging Retesting and Supporting Whole-Exam Scoring**

As part of our recent shift to scoring the CRCP, CRIP, and CRCS exams (CRCE and CCT remain the same) as a whole, we've made an important update to the exam retake process. In the past, section retakes were available, but now candidates will need to retake the full exam if they do not pass on the first attempt. This aligns with our new grading model, where passing scores are based on overall performance rather than individual section scores. The cost of retaking the full exam will be less than the initial registration fee, allowing candidates a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge across the entire exam. We believe this approach will encourage retesting and ensure that all candidates are assessed comprehensively, supporting our commitment to maintaining the highest standards in certification.

These updates are designed with our members' best interests in mind, ensuring a more efficient, flexible, and robust certification experience for everyone. We are confident that these changes will lead to improved exam preparation, timely certifications, and a more efficient use of resources for all involved.

Please see the below chart for reference:

Exam	Exam Fee	Reschedule	Rush/Late Schedule	Retake
CRCE	\$299	\$100	\$75	\$50 per section
CRCP	\$199	\$75	\$50	\$150
CRIP	\$199	\$75	\$50	\$150
CRCS	\$100	\$50	\$25	\$75
CCT	\$100	\$50	\$25	\$75

## **New Self-Management of CEU Submission Starting November 1, 2024**

In our continued effort to empower our credential holders and streamline processes, we are making an important update regarding the submission of Continuing Education Units (CEUs). Beginning November 1, 2024, CEU entry will be managed directly by credential holders rather than AAHAM staff. This change will provide you with greater control over your professional development and certification maintenance.

Here's how this update benefits you:

- **Complete Ownership of Your CEUs:** You will have the ability to directly enter and track your CEUs at your convenience, giving you more flexibility to manage your certification process in real time.
- **More Transparency:** You'll have clear visibility into your CEU submissions and requirements, allowing you to monitor your progress and plan for future activities with ease.
- **Ease of verification:** Chapters will still take attendance and keep attendance records for verification purposes in the event of an audit.

We understand this is a shift, but we believe that placing CEU management in your hands will offer a more efficient and transparent process. Our staff will be here to support you and provide guidance as needed, ensuring a smooth transition.

We're confident that this change will enhance your experience as a credential holder.

## **Exam Content Outline Grids Now Available on our website**

We are excited to announce that exam content outline grids have been added to our website as an additional study tool! These grids are designed to help you organize and focus your study efforts. You can use them to map out your study schedule and track your progress by marking areas based on what you already know, where you need more information, and what areas require further review.

Take advantage of this new resource to guide your preparation and enhance your exam readiness!

## December Government Payers Meeting

Register today for the can't-miss event of the year: MAPAM's Government Payer Meeting and Annual Holiday Celebration on December 12th, 2024!


[Register Today and View the Agenda!](#)

**\*Registration closes on 12/6/24\***

**Location:** Beechwood Hotel in Worcester, MA

**Cost:** \$85 for Members, \$125 for Non-Members

**Time:** 11 AM – 3 PM



MAPAM'S GOVERNMENT PAYER AND  
*holiday*  
**MEETING**  
Beechwood Hotel in Worcester, MA

Participate in the festive spirit of the season by donning your most outrageous holiday sweater for a chance to win an exciting prize! Savor a holiday lunch while receiving updates on government payers from:

- Massachusetts Health Connector
- NGS Medicare
- Maximus

**12/12/2024**  
STARTS AT 11:00AM

**REGISTER** → [HTTPS://MAPAM.ORG/MEETINGINFO.PHP](https://mapam.org/meetinginfo.php)

## MAPAM's Board of Directors

### President

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On behalf of everyone at MAPAM I would like to express our sincere gratitude for our 2024 sponsors!

