



The Association for Healthcare
Denial & Appeal Management

2023 Annual Benefit Report

About Us

The Association for Healthcare Denial and Appeal Management (AHDAM) is a public benefit corporation focused on bringing education, resources, and recognition to those working in the field of healthcare denial and appeal management.

The increasing growth of healthcare insurer audits and claim denials has created an increasing need for providers of healthcare (hospitals, physician's offices, home health care agencies, and the like) to include staff skilled in denial and appeal management as part of their revenue cycle, health information management (HIM), or compliance departments. Yet, today, there exists no nationally recognized standards for education or certification for persons working directly in denial and appeal management. Such persons would include clinical and technical denial appeal writers, utilization management and case management staff, physician advisors, contract management staff, and managed care representatives among others.

The purposes for which the corporation was formed, as stated in the articles of incorporation are:

- (a) To create a general public benefit through a material and positive impact on society and the environment through activities that promote a combination of specific public benefits described in Section (b) below.
- (b) To promote education and knowledge sharing in the field of health care insurance denial and appeal management.

WHAT IS A BENEFIT CORPORATION?

Benefit corporations and Certified B Corporations are both leaders of a global movement to use business as a force for good. Both meet higher standards of accountability and transparency. Both create the opportunity to unlock our full human potential and creativity to use the power of business for the higher purpose of solving society's most challenging problems.

<https://benefitcorp.net/businesses/benefit-corporations-and-certified-b-corps>

(c) To promote the interests of persons who manage insurance claims and claim appeals as an incident to the purposes stated above.

(d) To provide services, resources, and knowledge regarding medical insurance appeals to patient communities.



General public benefit

AHDAM has an overall vision of creating general public benefit through creating an even playing field where patients and healthcare providers are successful in persuading medical insurers to make proper payment decisions. Creating success for providers begins with educating providers on the rules of engagement in working with medical insurance payers. The end goal is for providers to obtain appropriate payment for appropriate services with as little expenditure of costly resources to achieve that goal.

Healthcare providers are not the only parties affected by healthcare insurance denials. Insurance policy beneficiaries also may incur additional expense for healthcare that is denied payment by the insurance plan. The vast majority of beneficiaries do not know that in certain circumstances they have a legal right to appeal the decision of an insurance carrier to deny coverage of healthcare benefits. AHDAM has a vision to help patients appeal inappropriate insurance denials to avoid the unexpected additional liability that can occur from denied claims. AHDAM would like to provide help through pro bono filing of appeals on behalf of the patient. Thus, the word patient appears in AHDAM's vision statement regarding creating an even playing field with medical insurance payers.

Investing AHDAM profits into providing pro bono work on behalf of beneficiaries is a future goal of AHDAM that will require creation of the platform and processes needed to provide this important work. Members of the denial and appeal community with the right expertise will assist beneficiaries in filing their appeal or will file the appeal on the beneficiary's behalf. We believe success in creating this general public benefit will occur in time when the association has a well-established member base and support from interested parties in creating this benefit.

Specific public benefit

AHDAM set out to provide a specific public benefit. That benefit is articulated in our mission statement. AHDAM exists to support and promote professionals working in the field of healthcare insurance denial and appeal management through education and collaboration. AHDAM has been successful in attracting members and providing educational benefit to those members.



Here is an example of AHDAM’s specific public impact, sent to us from an AHDAM member.

“You all at AHDAM have taught me so much!!! And last week, we had a BIG win with Anthem. About a year ago, an AHDAM webinar talked about fighting readmission denials. We started looking at all readmission denials and noticed HealthKeepers Plus (Medicaid) was just looking at the date and not the ICD-10 code. In the VA Medicaid policy and HealthKeepers Plus policy manual, the definition of same or similar diagnoses = same first 3 digits of primary ICD10. In January, we got up the courage to tell them we thought they were processing readmission penalties in error and sent them examples. They said on medical review, the admits were for the same reason. I pointed out that these are administrative denials - objective, clearly defined based on date and ICD-10 codes and they should not be conducting a medical review. Long story short - after 7 months, they finally agreed with us. And last week, HealthKeepers Plus issued a public statement that their policy was not in compliance and they would go back to 2020 and correct all the penalties issued in error! Not just for our facility, but ALL facilities - Woohoo!! Thank you all for your wisdom and direction!”

<https://providernews.anthem.com/virginia/articles/inpatient-readmission-payment-reduction-errors>

Educational offerings

AHDAM has created a specific public benefit through its educational offerings.

Eleven complimentary 60-minute webinars were offered to both AHDAM and non-AHDAM members in 2023, an increase of 2 webinars over the previous year. The webinar recordings and handouts were made available on the AHDAM website.

Continuing education units (CEUs) were purchased by AHDAM for the AHDAM member attendees. CEUs offered included:

- Association of Clinical Documentation Improvement Specialists (ACDIS): Certified clinical documentation specialist (CCDS)
- National Association of Healthcare Revenue Integrity (NAHRI): Certification in Healthcare Revenue Integrity (CHRI)
- Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC): CCM board certified case managers
- American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA): Certified health information management professionals
- American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC): Registered nurses

In total, 1,149 individual CEU certificates were awarded to webinar attendees, a decrease of 310 CEU certificates from 2022. The breakout of CEUs was:

- AHIMA 169
- ANCC 566
- ACDIS 172
- CCMC 200

- NAHRI 42

In total, the webinars hosted 4628 attendees, an increase of 2,306 attendees from 2022.

Requesting feedback from webinar participants is a requirement for issuing CEUs. The feedback from webinar attendees was overwhelmingly positive.

“It has given me additional arguments!”

“I learned new processes.”

“We will change the way we are appealing technical/no authorization denials.”

“Enjoy the useful information and guidance received.”

“The learning outcomes were fully met in detail with all the examples of denials and sources/format to appeal.”

“Excellent foundation on appeal tactics!”



AHDAM collaborated with two ACDIS chapters (Idaho/Washington ACDIS Chapter and the Minnesota ACDIS Chapter) to present two educational webinars tailored to Clinical Documentation Specialists (CDS’) in the management of clinical validation denials. From the Minnesota ACDIS Chapter:

“...Our audience of nearly 200 participants today means this content was heard by many individuals and health care organizations across Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Your review of the appeals/denials process, use of Coding Clinics and Guidelines, payer expectations, and plan of action was so helpful and practical. As you know, many CDI programs are involved in the process and are constantly seeking guidance in how to best represent their facility. Your conversational style and candor made the presentation especially engaging – it was a pleasure listening to you present this content!”

Knowledge transfer

Ten monthly members-only newsletters were produced with input from AHDAM advisory board members and other industry experts. A self-guided appeal writing workshop is available to members. Other resources provided to members include the latest industry news and a knowledge center with timely articles on current issues in denial and appeal management.

Denise Wilson worked with Karla Hiravi from March 2023 through December 2023 to ensure a successful transition for Denise to immediate past president of AHDAM and for Karla to president of AHDAM. This goal for 2023 was met.

Member support

AHDAM saw an increase of 191 members during 2023: 613 as of 12/31/23, up from 422 as of 12/31/22. A member’s survey was completed in December 2023 and emailed to all active members. 40.91% of members reported being very satisfied with their membership and 53.41% reported being satisfied. 56.98% felt they were very likely to renew their membership and 38.37% were likely to renew. 93.10% would recommend AHDAM membership to others. The appeal writing workshop was a clear favorite of AHDAM offerings (webinars were not included as a choice) and was also felt to need the most improvement. 94% of respondents were interested or very interested in a live, onsite 2-day workshop on denial and appeal management.

Clemons & Associates, Inc. continues to assist with managing and distributing The Benefit newsletter and The Brief weekly emails with content developed by AHDAM. They also manage CE certificates, member support, and the membership database. CEU certificate turnaround time, more responsive member assistance, consistent member communications, and accurate member data all showed an improvement over 2022.

Clemons & Associates, Inc. completed work on transitioning the AHDAM website to a new membership-focused website platform (MemberClicks). MemberClicks proved to be an easy and time-saving platform. Investigation of functionality of creating a member forum, as requested by members, is ongoing.

Broadening our educational offerings was a goal for 2023 and remains a goal for 2024. 2023 saw an increase in outpatient webinars from one in 2022 to two in 2023 (Appealing Chemotherapy and Biological Denials, and Successfully Defending Outpatient Authorization Denials.)

A virtual appeal writing workshop was developed in 2023 and will be presented in May 2024.

Addition of another board member from the revenue cycle or HIM field is ongoing.

Assessment of Societal and Environmental Performance

AHDAM was established as a benefit corporation in the state of Maryland. Maryland State Code, § 5-6C-08, regarding corporations and associations requires benefit corporations to annually complete an assessment of the societal and environmental performance of the benefit corporation. The assessment must be completed in accordance with a third-party standard. Annual benefit corporation assessments using a third-party standard is also a recommended best practice for benefit corporations. The assessment helps benefit corporations understand how they are meeting the intent of benefit corporations which is to provide a positive impact on societal or environmental needs. To meet this requirement, AHDAM recently completed the B Impact Assessment¹ created by B Lab, a global network that creates standards, policies, and tools for business and certifies B Corps². The results of the assessment were shared with AHDAM's Board of Directors at the February 15, 2024, quarterly meeting.

This report was prepared by:

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¹ <https://bimpactassessment.net/>

² From their website, <https://bcorporation.net/>

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As required by Maryland code, this report was shared with AHDAM's stockholders on 05/06/2024.