

2020 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, 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.
- (c) To promote the interests of persons who manage insurance claims and claim appeals as an incident to the purposes stated above.

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>

(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. Despite opening the association to membership during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, AHDAM has been successful in attracting members and providing educational benefit to those members.



AHDAM has created a specific public benefit through its educational offerings. Four free 60-minute webinars were offered to both AHDAM and non-AHDAM members in 2020. Continuing education units

(CEUs) were purchased by AHDAM for the webinar attendees. For the inaugural webinar, all webinar attendees received free CEUs. Following that, only AHDAM members received free CEUs. 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, 506 individual CEU certificates were awarded to webinar attendees. The breakout of CEUs was:

- AHIMA 137
- ANCC 183
- ACDIS 109
- CCMC 65
- NAHRI 12

In total, the webinars hosted 878 attendees.

Requesting feedback from webinar participants is a requirement for issuing CEUs. The feedback from webinar attendees was overwhelmingly positive. “[I] Feel more confident in discussions with payers and prepping for hearings.” “This was THE most helpful appeals webinar I have participated in, and I have new strategies that I can use immediately.” “I have been doing appeals for a long time and just now have learned there are more levels if appealing on behalf of the patient. I plan to incorporate this more in my appeal process.”

AHDAM collaborated with several local American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) chapters to present denial and appeal management educational webinars to the chapter members. Eastern Missouri Health Information Association, South Carolina Health Information Association, Georgia Health Information Association, and the Kansas Health Information Association all benefitted from educational webinars presented by AHDAM subject matter experts. The local IL chapter of the Association of Clinical Documentation Integrity Specialists also benefited from an AHDAM educational webinar.



Nine monthly members-only newsletters were produced with input from AHDAM advisory board members and other industry experts. A COVID-19 resource page was created to address denial and appeal issues related to services provided to address the pandemic. A self-guided appeal writing workshop is available to members and is the fourth-most visited page on the website. Other resources provided to members include latest industry news, and a knowledge center with timely articles on current issues in denial and appeal management.

Creating collaboration among members has been supported through an Ask the Expert feature on the website where members can ask questions and benefit from the answer which is shared with all website visitors. Very few questions have been submitted through this mechanism, although some questions submitted from webinars or directly to AHDAM officers have been answered and posted. Webinar attendees ask questions that are answered by presenters at the end of the webinar or are answered with individual emails following the webinar. However, some members have voiced a desire for increased collaboration among members. AHDAM plans to increase collaboration among members by creating a forum for knowledge exchange. Also, answers to questions from webinars will be presented in a format on the AHDAM website for all AHDAM members and website visitors to access.

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 April 26, 2021 quarterly meeting.



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 4/27/2021.