

Northwest Outlook

 **hfma**™ washington / alaska chapter
healthcare financial management association

September - December
 **2005** 

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Publication Objective

The NW Outlook is the official publication of the Washington/Alaska Chapter Healthcare Financial Management Association. Our objective is to provide members with information regarding Chapter and national activities, with current and useful news of both national and local significance to healthcare finance professionals and to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information.

President's Message



Jazzed on Alaska

by Eric Teshima, President

One of the benefits of being an officer in HFMA is the opportunity to travel on behalf of the chapter. On November 2nd, I was on my way to Anchorage. It was my first trip

to Alaska and it was everything I expected – majestic, beautiful and cold. For anyone who hasn't been there before, I suggest planning a visit. So why would any sane person make their first trip to Alaska in November? It was the 2nd annual Alaska HFMA meeting and I wanted to see it succeed.

Cathy LeMay and David Morgan put together a great program that included 2005-2006 National Chairman Richard Rodriguez, AR and HIPAA guru Day Egusquiza, representatives from the Alaska State Legislature, and the Denali Commission. There were 60 people in attendance including quite a few new members of HFMA. There are 70 Alaska members so this was a great turnout. The feedback from the meeting was very positive and equally as important was interest expressed by more members in helping out and also in expanding to two meetings a year in Alaska.

Providing quality education to Alaska members has always been one of the chapter's biggest challenges because of Alaska's geographic challenges. However, efforts by our Alaska members over the past two years have gone a long way toward addressing that need by pushing for a meeting in Alaska and putting together solid programs.

It was a pleasure to be part of the meetings these past two years and to meet more members from Alaska. As Chapter President, seeing this meeting succeed and become a regular part of our chapter operations has been very personally rewarding. The energy at the meeting was great and I look forward to being a part of future meeting and networking opportunities there. ■

www.waakhfma.org

Contributing Writers

Peg Figy

Richard Sleeth

Eric Teshima

THANK YOU!!!



Welcome New Members



**The Washington/Alaska Chapter is pleased to
announce the following new members**

FredrikAndreasson
Pacific Recovery

Amy Mckim
Red Cedar Partners

Sarah Shields
Erc Collections

James Yates
Swedish Cancer Institute

Becky Littke
Washington State University

Tracy Hursh
Chan Healthcare Auditors

Marilyn Walker
Bury & Associates

Maggie Hansen
Empire Health Services

Audrey Nudd
Regence BlueShield

Jake Smeltzer
Pacific Medicaid

Tammy Garner
Pacific Edi, Inc.

Candy Jones
Cascade General Hospital

Kevin Debruyne
Mckesson Provider Technologies

Joann Jaillet
Central Peninsula General Hospital

Mitchell Murri
Mitch Murri Consulting

Phillip Moreau
Franciscan Health System

Terri Harris
Pathology Associates Med. Lab

Dawn Boedefeld
Providence Health Systems in Alaska

Janice Bruchhauser Leura
Providence Hospital

Maryann Freepartner
Providence Health Systems Of Alaska

Dana Montgomery
Providence Health System

Marietta Morein
Providence Health System Ak

Kristin Ouellette
Providence Health System AK

Jan Dodds
Providence Health System in AK

Phil Holboy
Skagit Valley Hospital

Nicole Rice
Providence Health System In Ak

Amy Levinson
Fosselman & Associates, Cpas

Elizabeth Caldwell
Providence Physician Group

Christy Arden-Karjeker
Providence Health System

Charlene Justice
Providence Physician Group

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Welcome New Members

John Burns

Columbia County Health System

Paul Shary

Providence Health System Alaska

Amy Thompson

Providence Health System Alaska

Sherri Tullis

Providence Health System Alaska

Timothy Kelly

Providence Health System Alaska

Mary Ann Kirven

Providence Health System Alaska

Nelly Perez

Providence Health System Alaska

Catherine Rosynek

Providence Health System Alaska

David Swarner

Providence Health System Alaska

Mariam Aidroos

Norton Sound Regional Corp

Tina Brust

Aim Healthcare Services

Woody English

Providence Health System

Maj Voun

Charles Wright

Davis Wright Tremaine LLP

Michael Barrows

Swedish Medical Center

Darlene Hebel

Norton Sound Health Corporation

Meg Taylor

Red Cedar Partners



BANKRUPTCY LAWS UPDATE

by Richard Sleeth

Although I am not a Bankruptcy attorney, I have been researching many articles regarding the new codes and have identified several common threads among these changes, which could be helpful in understanding what they mean to you and your business.

Recent Revisions:

The most important point to understand under the new guidelines is consumers are going to find it significantly harder to file for Chapter 7 relief. In the past a Chapter 7 has allowed consumers to wash their hands of all current and past debts and start over with the only major consequence being an adverse bankruptcy report on their credit Bureau's, which would last for 7 to 10 years.

In addition to this Bankruptcy Lawyers are estimating due to the additional work that will be required as well potential fines for them not ensuring all income is verified the cost to file will increase considerably. Estimates from Bankruptcy Lawyers have been as high as filings costing as much as 50% more.

- Under the new law there will now be a 'means test' for anyone filing Bankruptcy. The 'means test' will measure the debtor's ability to repay. Consumers with income above their states median who can pay at least \$6000 over 5 year (i.e. \$100/month) would be forced to chapter 13 filing where the court would order a repayment plan.
- Homestead exemptions will harder to obtain. The IRS will now have housing allowances by county, which will provide limits on monthly Mortgages amounts. (i.e. if \$1500 is the limit in a consumers state and their mortgage is \$2000 under the new law it is possible that the difference \$500 will not be deductible and will be considered disposable income when

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calculating the means test.

- Consumers filing bankruptcy will have to pay for credit counseling. The new law requires them to obtain a certificate from an approved financial counselor before a Bankruptcy petition is filed.
- Top priority will be given to spouse's claims for child support among creditors claims on a consumer's bankruptcy.
- 401K's used to be exempt from Bankruptcy. Under the new laws individual retirement plans-like IRA's are safe up to \$1 million. Rollover IRA's have no limit . Also under the old law you're not allowed to continue to repay pension loans.

Additional Economic Factors:

Credit card minimum payments are being raised from 2% to 4% by many of the large card issuers. This is due to a directive passed in 2003 by The Treasury Department office of the Comptroller of Currency, which is now being enforced more rigorously than in the past.

Also as of July the majority of all tracked delinquencies were down with a few notable exceptions.

- Home equity lines of credit.
- Property improvement loans.
- Past due payments on home equity lines of credit.

The price of gas continues to rise hitting an average of \$2.65 per gallon, 78 cents higher than one year ago. This economic factor more than most has long reaching effects on all aspects of our economy.

So most importantly what do these changes and contributing economic factors mean to you? Between now and October consumers considering bankruptcy will most certainly be filing before the more stringent guidelines effect their filing status. According to the American Bankruptcy Institute

more than 393,000 cases had been reported last quarter, 8% over the previous quarter.

Homeowner related delinquencies are rising, meaning consumers have maxed out there equity in their property, taking advantage of low refinance rates to dissolve credit card debt. As these consumers are now out of equity they will turn back to their credit cards. Since the credit card issuers have increased minimum monthly payments, consumers with diminished home equity will struggle to maintain the minimum payments on their credit card obligation.

Be Prepared !:

Start working with your collection staff in ways to identify possible problem accounts earlier in the account lifecycle than usual. Has your consumer recently lost their job? Are they overextended on their bills? It is important that your collection staff ask as many questions as possible to make educated decisions regarding the collectability of your accounts. If you previously ran credit bureaus on delinquent accounts with an average balance of \$1000.00 + at 90 days, start running them at 60 or for larger balance accounts at 30 days delinquent.

If your collections rep identifies a homeowner with equity, convince your consumer that it would be in their best interest to refinance and dissolve as much debt as possible. However contradictory this may sound, the cold fact is if you don't another creditor will.

Conclusion:

Nobody claims to have a crystal ball when it comes to dealing with problems arising with your accounts due to the new changes in bankruptcy code. However a good contingency plan based upon adaptability will save you and your staff many lost hours and more importantly lost dollars in dealing with unforeseen "hick-ups" in the system.

Please email me your questions and comments
rsleeth@sentrycredit.com ■



Mark Your Calendar

Jan. 29-Feb. 1, 2006

HFMA

Region 11 Symposium

Caesars Palace

Las Vegas

Nevada

SEE YOU THERE!

Would you like to check your progress toward a Founders Merit Award.

Individual scoring records for the Founders Merit Award program are maintained for chapter members by LCC Council III.

To receive a copy of your record, please contact

Tom Muller

*Telephone: (360) 236-4215
Facsimile: (360) 664-8579
Email: tom.muller@doh.wa.gov*

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The Chapter would like to thank the following companies for 2005 - 2006 sponsorships:

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NDC Health
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COUNCIL LEADERS

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Council III	Dennis Stillman	stillman@u.washington.edu	Membership Services
Committee A	Grant Baumgartner	grant.baumgartner@protiviti.com	Compliance and Health Policy
Committee B	Charlie Brown	charlie.brown@multicare.org	Managed Care and PFS
Committee C	Jim Heilsberg	heilsbj@inhs.org	Keynote Speakers, News & Current Events
Committee D	Doug Bishop	bishopd@whidbeygen.org	Finance and Information Systems
Committee E	Eric Moro	moroe@providenceservices.org	Rural, Post Acute, Alaska



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healthcare financial management association

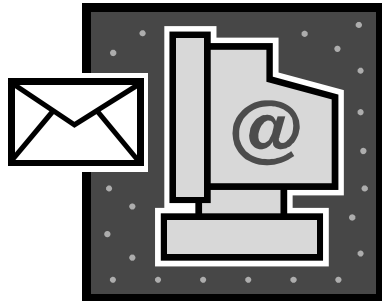
Job Opportunities

POSITION AVAILABLE	POSTED	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
Asst Controller	11-05	Good Samaritan	Puyallup, WA
Business Office Manager	9-05	NW Cancer Specialists	Vancouver, WA
Business Office Manager	11-05	Mary Bridge Children's Alliance	Tacoma, WA
Chargemaster Coordinator	9-05	Fairbanks Memorial	Faribanks, AK
Chargemaster Spec-Compliance Analyst	10-05	Olympic Medical Center	Port Angeles, WA
Controller	5-05	Whidbey General Hospital	Coupeville, WA
Decision Support Analyst	11-05	Providence Health Services	Everett, WA
Decision Support Coordinator	11-05	St. John Medical Center PeaceHealth	Longview, WA
Director Finance	5-05	Harborview Medical Center	Seattle, WA
Financial Analyst	11-05	Providence Health Systems	Portland, OR
Financial Manager Consultative Svcs	11-05	Group Health Cooperative	Seattle, WA
Financial Planning Mgr,	5-05	Providence Health Systems	Portland, OR
Healthcare Accountants	11-05	Michael R. Bell & Co.	Spokane, WA
Manager Patient Access	11-05	Overlake Hospital & Med Ctr	Bellevue, WA
Patient Accounts Director	11-05	Hospital	Barrow, AK
Reimbursement Analyst/Mgr	11-05	Providence Health Services	Spokane, WA
Revenue Cycle Specialist (2)	5-05	Harborview Medical Center	Seattle, WA
Revenue Manager	5-05	Cancer Care Alliance	Seattle, WA
Sr. Accountant	11-05	Community Health Care	Tacoma, WA
Sr. Financial Analyst	6-05	Kadlec Medical Center	Richland, WA
Sr. Financial Analyst - Budget	11-05	Good Samaritan	Tacoma, WA
Sr. Contract Specialist	11-05	Providence Health Systems	Portland, OR
System Dir of Accounting	11-05	6 Hospital system	Oregon

For more on these listings or to include a listing, please contact Peg Figy, (509) 482-2348 or email: figypa@holy-family.org
See also National HFMA's website (www.hfma.org) for additional job listings.

HOW DO I CHANGE MY HFMA INFORMATION?

All of our chapter directory information including e-mail and addresses



for the newsletter are received from the National HFMA database.

The easiest way to make changes is via the internet. Simply follow these steps to change any of your personal information.

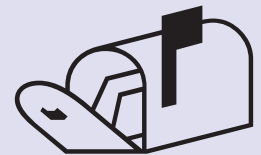
- 1. Log on to <http://www.hfma.org>**
- 2. Go to the membership section**
- 3. Log in using the username and password prompts**
- 4. Follow instructions to access your Profile**
- 5. Edit information.**

WIN \$100.00



You could win \$100 by writing an article for N.W. Outlook! Share your knowledge & experiences with other HFMA Members. You can help make a difference!

Please send information & articles for upcoming newsletters to:



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Pacific Medicaid Services, Inc.
819 West Seventh Ave
Spokane WA 99204

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FAX: 509-456-8811

E-mail:
cshank@pacificmedicaid.com

UPCOMING CHAPTER MEETINGS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
January 29-Feb 1, 2006	HFMA Region 11 Symposium	Caesars Palace - Las Vegas
February 15-17, 2006	HFMA Workshop, Meeting, & Vendor Fair	Sheraton - Tacoma
May 17-19, 2006	HFMA Workshop & Meeting	Davenport Hotel - Spokane
June 18-22, 2006	HFMA National ANI Conference	Gaylords Palm Rst - Orlando
September 27-29, 2006	HFMA Workshop & Meeting (joint w/OR)	Skamania Lodge - Skamania
October 2006	HFMA Alaska Meeting	TBD - Anchorage
December 2006	HFMA / AAHAM Workshop	TBD - Seatac
January 2007	HFMA Region 11 Symposium	TBD - Las Vegas
February 14-16, 2007	HFMA Workshop, Meeting, & Vendor Fair	Sheraton - Tacoma
May 16-18, 2007	HFMA Workshop & Meeting	CDA Resort - C'ouer d'Alene

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Inside This Issue:

- President's Message
 - Welcome New Members
 - Bankruptcy Laws Update
 - Corporate Sponsors
 - Council Leaders
 - Job Opportunities
 - How Do I Change My HFMA Information?
 - Win \$100
 - Upcoming Chapter Meetings
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