

Northwest Outlook



hfma™ washington / alaska chapter
healthcare financial management association

December
2004



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Publication Objective

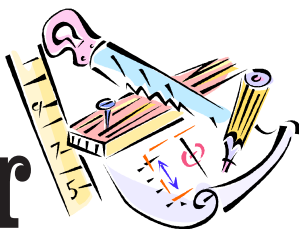
The NW Outlook is the official publication of the Washington/Alaska Chapter Healthcare Financial Management Association. Our objective is to provide members with information regarding Chapter and national activities, with current and useful news of both national and local significance to healthcare finance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

President's Message



Gregg Terreson
Chapter President

EXTREME Makeover



In a rare lapse of inactivity, I was pondering how the expectations on healthcare financial managers have grown an unusual amount this year. Where I sit as the CFO of a for profit facility, just from Sarbanes-Oxley alone the expectations on me have changed dramatically. And I imagine it is the same with you.

Recently my family has gotten in the habit of watching every Sunday evening the show "Extreme Makeover - Home Edition." For those who may have better things to do on Sunday nights, it is one of those "reality" shows. The premise of the show is that they find a family who has been through some tough times and are living in some form of dilapidated housing. A family is chosen by

surprise and after meeting the design team, they are whisked off in some super long limo for a week at Disney or some resort. Meanwhile, an army of designers, contractors, builders, camera crews and innumerable volunteers descend on the house and within a week build a brand new home in 7 days.

In fact in the middle of November this year, the Extreme Makeover team landed in Kingstons in Kitsap County to build a home for a family in such tough times. Being curious, our family took the ferry over to Kingstons to check this out. This was no normal construction site - dozens of construction workers (some even working), 24-7

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www.waakhfma.org

Contributing Writers

Peggy Figy
Kevin Hamilton
Tom Muller
Gregg Terreson
Eric Teshima

THANK YOU!!!

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kleig lighting, tents and trailers everywhere and crowds of the curious (like us) trying to see how it is actually done and get a glimpse of the stars. No Ty – but Preston and Michael of the design team were there that day.

For these lucky families, they are given seven days to start all over.

Wouldn't that be nice in the office. Can you imagine "Extreme Makeover – Office Edition." You trudge into the office Monday morning with Starbucks in hand when all of a sudden someone comes in shouting thru a megaphone "Gooooood Morning Accounting Department." You are whisked off to another office (because you are too busy to actually take time off) and then a team of consultants and designers take over. A week later and you come back to a new office with new furniture, new computers and a network that actually stays up. They have documented and tested all your financial processes and even organized your files, answered your e-mail and deleted all your spam.

Alas it is just not that way. Finding solutions, fixing problems and dealing with change is hard –and it doesn't happen in 7 days. Just ask anyone in finance who has had to deal with the implementation of Sarbanes Oxley – or the billing offices who converted to a new Medicare intermediary – or anyone of us who have gone through a recent systems installation. And what about the nursing managers who are trying to hire staff, reduce agency and meet staffing levels 24-7 or the material managers who are doing every thing they can to get staff to become more "Lean" in the use of supplies. I could go on and on.

With all these changes, we have been asked to do more in 2004 than we expected. And with the exploding issue of the underinsured and uninsured and upcoming state budget woes, 2005 will prove to be no different. Yet, you will find a way to respond- even if there is no "Extreme Makeover Team" to solve things in 7 days flat. ■

Upcoming HFMA/AAHAM Joint Meeting & Vendor Fair

by

Eric Teshima

Overlake Hospital Medical Center

Make plans now to attend the HFMA/AAHAM Joint Meeting and Vendor Fair on February 16th–18th at the Sheraton Tacoma. It's our biggest chapter meeting of the year and we've got some great speakers lined up for the meeting and about forty vendors available to share information about their products and services.



There will be three keynote speakers for the meeting starting off with Richard Peterson, CEO of Swedish Health Services discussing the economics of healthcare. Day Egusquiza is the second keynote speaker and she'll guide you through Internal Auditing of the Revenue Cycle. Day is a familiar name to many of us having spoken at previous chapter and national HFMA events. We'll conclude the meeting on Friday with Brent Bishop bringing stories from Mt. Everest and how they relate to the business world.

Concurrent sessions will be occurring throughout the rest of the meeting with topics ranging from improving the operations of your Patient Access, to what you still need to know about coding and billing, to compliance issues, to HIPAA and denials management, to WIFI systems and more.

It's not all work and no fun. Thursday night features a reception, dinner, and the return of Wild Bill's Casino Night. Between that and the vendor fair, the opportunity to network has never been better.

Brochures should be out around the first week of January.

Hope to see you there. ■

Hidden Limitations of Public Information Used in Comparative Pricing Analysis

by

Kevin D. Hamilton

Senior Consultant

Protiviti, Inc.



A common misunderstanding is that competitor information comes from the "MEDPAR files." While the inpatient data does come from the Medicare Provider Analysis and Review (MEDPAR) file, the outpatient data comes from the Outpatient Prospective Payment standard analytical file. The inpatient file contains data from claims for services provided to beneficiaries admitted to Medicare certified inpatient hospitals and skilled nursing facilities (SNF). The outpatient file includes select claim level data and is derived from hospital outpatient PPS claims. These two files provide the most reliable way to get accurate information of competitor prices, and constitute the primary way that consulting firms, Chargemaster software, and hospital personnel set market driven prices for hospital services. However, what many people do not realize is that the data needs to be used in a way that helps limit the potential flaws and exploits the positive benefits of having competitor information. A list of the more common flaws appears below. This list should not be taken as all-inclusive, many other issues can arise that need to be mitigated on a case-by-case basis.

1. ***Data is old and doesn't accurately reflect the current inflated charge.***

One of the major issues with the Medicare data is the timeliness of the data that is available. The data is approximately one year behind the current year. For example, currently the 2003 data will be available near the end of 2004. To appropriately set prices for the year 2005, the Medicare data needs to be inflated by an artificial inflation factor to bring it current. This inflation factor can be determined by gut feel, "I think my competitors are increasing prices by about 8% per year." A more concrete way to do this would be to examine trends in commonly available data, such as Department of Health information, to determine a more accurate inflation factor.

2. ***Competitor data may or may not include the price of equipment and supplies in the procedure price.***

One of the potential flaws of the Medicare competitor data is the inability to know what is included in the price that competitors are charging. As can be seen in exhibit 1, there is one hospital in each group that

is priced significantly higher than everyone else. For CPT 70552, hospital A has decided to bundle their contrast charge in with the procedure while hospitals C and D charge separately for contrast. Hospital B appears to be priced out of the market for this procedure. Similarly, in CPT 12031, hospital D is bundling the supplies into the price for this procedure while hospitals B and C are charging for the supplies separately. Hospital A is priced significantly lower than market. If prices are set without taking into account this difference, it is possible to set prices that are out of the market.

3. ***Procedures are coded the same, but don't reflect the same amount of work.***

It is important to recognize that procedures may be coded the same in the Medicare database, but not actually reflect what is being done at your facility. The procedure listed below exemplifies the differences that can arise from the market data. In exhibit 2, hospital A's price

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actually reflects a visit in the emergency room that is for fast track patients, an urgent care type visit. Hospital B and C are similarly priced and accurately reflect the level 1 emergency room visit. Hospital D appears to be out of the market in pricing for this procedure. If you were to base your new price on this data you would

department managers regarding their thoughts on appropriate prices for these service lines.

5. How are your competitors making their money?

If your competitors are logically applying pricing principles, they will probably have higher prices in service lines where their managed care

pulling a price out of thin air. To help eliminate this potential problem, outlier prices should be eliminated from price benchmark data. This will give a much truer picture of what a service's market supported price should be.

Though the MEDPAR file has flaws when it comes to pricing data, it still represents the most

Exhibit 1: Supply effect on pricing					
CPT	Procedure	Hospital A	Hospital B	Hospital C	Hospital D
70552	MRI- Brain w/contrast	\$1,952.00	\$799.00	\$1,092.00	\$1,110.00
12031	Layer Closure <2.5cm	\$122.00	\$192.00	\$181.00	\$374.00

Exhibit 2: Procedural difference in pricing					
CPT	Procedure	Hospital A	Hospital B	Hospital C	Hospital D
99281	Level 1 ED Visit	\$43.00	\$89.00	\$95.00	\$175.00

need to take into account the actual procedure that is being done as well as the work involved in doing this procedure at your facility. This usually entails a conversation with the department, as well as consideration of the market stance of your hospital.

4. Are others providing this procedure in this market?

This is primarily an issue only on outpatient services such as outpatient surgery, therapies, and some imaging procedures. Often hospitals find that ambulatory surgery centers and physician offices pop up right across the street. Unfortunately, the data for surgery center prices is much more difficult to obtain and is usually not available in a public forum. In these situations, it is important to listen to your

reimbursement is better. It is important when reviewing benchmarking data that you keep in mind that your area of greater reimbursement may not be the same service line as the hospital down the street. Consequently, you may not always strive to increase your prices to the maximum amount allowed by the market.

6. Do your competitors know how to set prices?

This point is one of the more crucial factors to consider when performing a pricing analysis. Many of your competitor hospitals do not have a methodology to set reasonable and defensible prices. Many of these facilities leave pricing up to the department managers, these managers may or may not know how to price a procedure and could potentially end up

comprehensive set of data that is available today. All of the flaws listed above can be mitigated by skilled professionals who have experience with using the data and can recognize data that looks appropriate and data that appears flawed. Setting defensible prices is important in this time of ever increasing lawsuits and congressional subpoenas. This data provides the most accurate way to know what your competitors are charging for their services so that reasonable pricing can be set.

Kevin D. Hamilton
Senior Consultant
Protiviti, Inc.
Seattle, WA

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206.852.2770 (cell)



Mark Your Calendar

Jan. 23-26, 2005

HFMA Region 11 Symposium

**Rio Suites
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 main-
tained 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 following companies
for 2004 - 2005 sponsorships:

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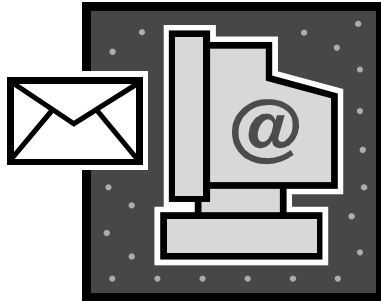
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HOW DO I CHANGE MY HFMA INFORMATION?

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.

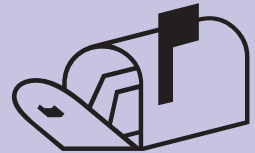
- 1. Log on to <http://www.hfma.org>**
- 2. Go to the membership section**
- 3. Log in using the username and password prompts**
- 4. Follow instructions to access your Profile**
- 5. Edit information.**

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:



Ginger Rhoades
634 Valley Westside Road
Colville WA 99114

Phone:
509-684-5778

E-mail: mgbell49@hotmail.com



Welcome New Members



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

Kimberly Bachelor

Accounts Receivable Manager
Seattle Cancer Care Alliance
Seattle, WA

Susan Ma

Financial Analyst
Harborview Medical Center
Sammamish, WA

Chris Jones

Owner
Accelerated Collection Service, Inc
Kent, WA

Nancy Odell

Sr Financial Analyst
Providence Washington Service Center
Renton, WA

James G. Kodjababian

Consultant
Point B Solutions Group
Seattle, WA

Timothy D. Cournyer

Controller
Morton General Hospital
Mossyrock, WA

Rick A. Stegman

Regional Sales Manager
Benefit Recovery
Seattle, WA

Bruce W. Butler

Kirkland, WA

Derek Quinn

Audit Manager
Chan Healthcare Auditors
Tacoma, WA

Gerald Lockhart

AVP & Relationship Manager
U.S. Bank
Spokane, WA

Jeff D. Cowan

Senior Finance Analyst
Renton, WA

Jennifer S. Buss

Senior Accountant
Lemaster & Daniels PLLC
Spokane, WA

Archie R. Tonge

Mgr Contracting & Business Development
Virginia Mason Medical Center
Seattle, WA

Cheryl A. Eisele

Patient Financial Services Consultant
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Eagle River, AK

Judy Wallak

Seattle, WA

Kellyann Bowman

Project Manager
Group Health Cooperative
Seattle, WA

Matthew J. Iskra

Actuarial Associate
Redmond, WA

Rebecca Yvarra

University Place, WA

Benjamin N. Alex

Senior Consultant
ECG Management Consultants
Seattle, WA

Pamela R. Braaten

Director of Business Systems
Harborview Medical Center
Seattle, WA

Kerrin M. Gibbons

Senior Vice President
Bank of America
Seattle, WA

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**Get
Connected!**

Welcome New Members!

Janice Johnson

Healthcare Specialist
Legend Data Systems
Kent, WA

Matthew J. Blackmore

Manager, Payor Contracting
Providence Washington Regional Services
Renton, WA

Robert C. Farrell

Chief Finance Officer
Community Health Ctr of
Snohomish County
Everett, WA

James M. Runquist

Payment Integrity Analyst
The Regence Group
Seattle, WA

Lori A. Lara

Financial Analyst
Franciscan Health System
Puyallup, WA

Teena G. Hauck

Administrative Assistant to CFO
Central Washington Hospital
Wenatchee, WA

Christine Dwight

Regional Director, Compliance
Franciscan Health System
Tacoma, WA

Joshua D. Lewis

Senior Staff Accountant
Moss Adams LLP
Everett, WA

Debbie Palumbo

Program Integrity Manager
Harrison Memorial Hospital
Bremerton, WA

Dave Corn

Manager Revenue Capture
Harrison Hospital
Bremerton, WA

Lance K. Mertz

Finance Director
Ketchikan Indian Corporation
Ketchikan, AK

Sheila Granda

Senior Consultant
Protiviti
Seattle, WA

Maura J. Lentini

Associate Vice President
D. A. Davidson & Co.
Seattle, WA

Navnit K. Mangat

Student
Masters In Health Admin
Everett, WA

William T. Vanderford

Senior Manager
Protiviti
Seattle, WA

Martin D. Hubble

Financial Liaison
Empire Health Services
Veradale, WA

Lisa Yamilkoski

Financial Systems Specialist
Overlake Hospital Med Center
Bellevue, WA

Alexandra A. Azor

Business Analyst
Vha, Inc
Seattle, WA

Bruce W. Johnson

Hospital Planner
Alaska Native Medical Center
Anchorage, AK

Kristi Powers

Denial Manager
Davita
Tacoma, WA

Cheri Aylesworth

Finance & Budget Manager
Group Health
Spokane, WA

Debi Barneycastle

Revenue Cycle Manager
Kittitas Valley Community Hospital
Ellensburg, WA

David P. Hennigan

Chief Financial Officer
Albuquerque, NM

Cole A. White

Student
Washington State University
Post Falls, ID

Ann Marie Davis

Director of Internal Audit
Children's Hospital &
Regional Medical Center
Seattle, WA

Jo Ann Henry

Contract - Denial Manager
Ocean Beach Hospital
Ilwaco, WA



Now Is The Time To Become

by Tom Muller, Founders Award Chairman

Involved

Are you satisfied with the topics and speakers at the chapter's quarterly meetings? Do you have some ideas to make them better? Then it is time to join an LCC committee. These committees determine the topics and recruit the speakers. You can be a part of this process. The committees are divided by subject matter as follows:

- **Committee A** – Compliance, Health Policy, Legislative and Regulatory Issues, Legal and Tax Issues, Human Resource Management, Leadership, and Personal Development
- **Committee B** – Government and Other Third Party Reimbursement, Patient Financial Services, Physician Relations, Practice Management, and Managed Care
- **Committee C** – Keynote Speakers, Current Events, and HFMA News
- **Committee D** – Technology and Information Systems, Financial and Accounting Issues, Quality Management, Strategic Planning, Budgeting, and Capital Formation
- **Committee E** – Critical Access Hospitals, Post-Acute Healthcare, and Issues Unique to Alaska Members

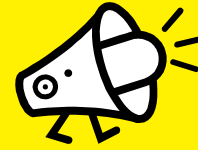
If you are satisfied with the current topics and speakers you still need to become a member of an LCC committee. Remember, it takes the efforts of volunteer members to provide these programs. You can be one of those volunteer members.

Are you satisfied with the timing

and location of chapter meetings? Do you have suggestions to improve the process? Don't just complain about the situation. Do something about it. Join LCC Council 1 to have a voice in the selection of meeting dates and locations. This is also the place to plan social and networking events and activities, evaluate program content and logistics, and recruit sponsors.

Do you have ideas for membership recruitment and retention? Would you like to see changes in the forms of member recognition? Are you interested in matching members looking for employment opportunities with organizations looking to fill vacancies? Are you interested in editing chapter publications, such as the newsletter and membership directory? If your answer to any of these questions is "yes", LCC Council 3 is the place for you.

There are additional incentives to become a part of LCC. The LCC meetings provide excellent networking opportunities. You earn Founders Award points for participation in LCC. The chapter provides dinner for all members who attend LCC meetings. In addition, all members attending LCC, except officers and directors, are entered into a drawing for a \$50 prize. The latest winner of this prize was Silke Petersen. Silke has been an active member of LCC for a long time and has also been a speaker at chapter meetings. ■



**Chapter
Positions
OPEN**

As we start to plan for the next fiscal year, there are two key positions in the chapter that we know will need to be filled. The two positions are **Facilities Chair** and **Newsletter Editor**.

The Facilities Chair is responsible for hotel arrangements for the meetings. This includes contracting with the hotel for future meeting dates, being the liaison with the hotel staff to make sure the appropriate rooms are set up and equipment is provided as needed, providing the hotel with meal counts and selecting the food for the meetings.

The Newsletter Editor is responsible for producing the chapter's newsletters. As the name implies, the editor is not responsible for writing all of the newsletter articles, but for coordinating the content. Training is available at HFMA's Leadership Training Conference in April so you don't need to have prior newsletter experience.

Both positions start in June.

If you are interested in either position, please contact Eric Teshima at (425) 688-5149 or eteshima@overlakehospital.org

Founder's Awards presented to Members for Service to the Chapter



Lori Nomura and Mark Flaten in deep discussion.



Catherine Wakefield and Grant Baumgartner receive their Reeves.



Gregg Terreson, Tom Dingus, and Anne Stallard receive their Founders Medal of Honor.



Rik Lewis and Mark Flaten accepting their Follmer Bronze awards.



Rik Lewis, Susan Ruchin, Elaine Phelps and Mark Flaten receive their Follmer Bronze Founders Awards.



Mike Cross and Annette Edwards receive their Munice Gold Founders Awards.

Highlights from the September 2004 Meeting at Alderbrook Resort



Catherine Wakefield, Grant Baumgartner and Frank Hemeon receive their Reeves Silver Founders Awards.



Keith Mock and Elvis



Keith Mock and Gregg Terreson show why they should remain in Finance.



Some of the entertaining Hawaiian dancers.



Accountants Gone Wild!



Joyce Gibb and one of the Hawaiian dancers



hfma washington / alaska chapter
healthcare financial management association

Job Opportunities

POSITION AVAILABLE	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
Asset Accounting Supervisor	Harborview Medical Center	Seattle, WA
CFO	Small Hospital (49 bed CAH)	Oregon
CFO	Small Hospital (200 bed)	Oregon
CFO	Mountain View Hospital	Idaho Falls, ID
CFO	Klickitat Valley Health Services	Goldendale, WA
Charge Submission Mgmt Analyst #2366	Harborview Medical Center	Seattle, WA
Controller	Lower Umpqua Hospital	Reedsport, OR
Controller	Pacific Medical Centers	Seattle, WA
Controller	Harborview Medical Center	Seattle, WA
Decision Support Analyst	Southwest Washington Med Ctr	Vancouver, WA
Decision Support Analyst	Providence Everett Medical Center	Everett, WA
Financial Counseling Manager	St. Joseph Hospital	Bellingham, WA
Finance Manager	Valley Hospital & Medical Ctr	Spokane, WA
Financial Analyst (3)	Evergreen Healthcare	Kirkland, WA
Managed Care Contract Spec	Children's Hospital & Med Ctr	Seattle, WA
Program Operations Specialist/Analyst – Inventory	Harborview Medical Center	Seattle, WA
Program Operations Specialist/Analyst – Bonds, CIP ...	Harborview Medical Center	Seattle, WA
Reimbursement Analyst	Legacy Health Systems	Portland, OR
Reimbursement Manager	Providence Health Systems	Seattle, WA
Reimbursement Manager / Director	LeMaster & Daniels, LLP	Spokane, WA
Revenue Accounting Analyst	Harborview Medical Center	Seattle, WA
Revenue Cycle Mgmt Specialist #2693	Harborview Medical Center	Seattle, WA
Revenue Cycle Manager #2676	Harborview Medical Center	Seattle, WA
Revenue Manager # 015793	Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center	Seattle, WA
Revenue Cycle Manager	UW Health Sciences Center	Seattle, WA
Senior Financial Analyst	Good Samaritan Hospital	Puyallup, WA
Senior Financial Analyst	Central Washington Hospital	Wenatchee, WA
Strategic Development Analyst	Providence St. Peter Hospital	Olympia, WA

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

...on these listings or to include a listing, please contact Peg Figy,
(509) 474-5480 or emailto: figyp@holy-family.org

See also National HFMA's website (www.hfma.org) for additional job listings.

Last update:December 2004

Success in Alaska

by
Gregg Terresson
Kindred Hospital, Seattle



Early in 2004, three Alaska members, David Morgan, Cathy LeMay and Donna Herbert starting asking for more Alaska specific programming. Through their determination and the help of Greg Moga and Eric Teshima, they were able to put together the first Alaska meeting in some ten or more years.

Working with the Alaska Hospital and Nursing Home Association, they planned a one day meeting on Wednesday October 13th in conjunction with the association's annual meeting – this year at the downtown Anchorage Marriott.

Over 75 people attended the HFMA meeting, including many non-members from Alaska and even a handful of members who came up from Washington. Chapter President Gregg Terresson opened the meeting with an overview of the chapter for the Alaska members and explained that he has Alaskan roots, too (as his great grandfather was born in Sitka 150 years ago).

We started the morning with our keynote speaker and to help get this meeting off to a great start we invited Dick Clarke, our national President and CEO of HFMA. Making the long haul from Chicago, Dick gave a great speech on the two of the hottest issues in healthcare – financing the future capital needs of hospitals and dealing with the current billing issues of the uninsured and underinsured.

The rest of the sessions were focused on Alaska issues including:

- Speakers from Alaska Medicaid discussed the latest Alaska Medicaid regulations and issues
- Dave Berk, a frequent speaker at Washington events, came up to Anchorage to talk about the latest on benchmarking for Critical Access Hospitals
- Expanding on these theme, Donna Herbert, Dean Otey and Martin Michiels from Financial Consultants offered tips on how to improve the bottom line of Critical Access Hospitals
- The meeting finished with a session by Rosemary Holliday of Chargemasters.com on the processes and tools that can be used to successfully maintain your chargemaster.

The response to this meeting was great and we are already planning a return to Alaska next October. Thanks go again to David Morgan, Cathy LeMay and Donna Herbert for their determination in making this meeting a reality. ■



UPCOMING CHAPTER MEETINGS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
January 23-26, 2005	HFMA Region 11 Symposium	Rio Suites - Las Vegas, Nevada
February 16-18, 2005	Workshop, Meeting and Vendor Fair	Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center - Tacoma, Washington
May 25-27, 2005	Workshop and Meeting	Campbell's Resort & Conference Center - Chelan, Washington
September 21-23, 2005	Workshop and Meeting	Bremerton Harborside Hotel - Bremerton, Washington
October 2005	Joint Meeting with Alaska State Hospital & Nursing Home Association	Anchorage, Alaska
December 1, 2005	Joint Workshop with AAHAM	SeaTac, Washington
January 2006	HFMA Region 11 Symposium	Las Vegas, Nevada
February 15-17, 2006	Workshop, Meeting and Vendor Fair	Tacoma, Washington
May 17-19, 2006	Workshop and Meeting	Davenport Hotel - Spokane, Washington
September 27-29, 2006	Joint Meeting with Oregon HFMA	Skamania Lodge - Stevenson, Washington

www.waakhfma.org



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