

President's Message. . .

by Anne Stallard



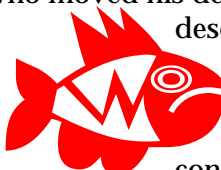
Anne Stallard

VIVA LAS VEGAS

The Las Vegas meeting was great. Thirty-seven people attended the meeting from WA/AK. Listening and meeting Ken Blanchard, author of the *One-Minute Manager*, was enlightening. Instead of calling admissions people

"Receptionists," they are now the "Directors of First Impressions." When you really think about it, they are the first contact with the public. He told us about a situation that happened at the Department of Licensing. His last experience had taken him three hours of waiting in the office, so he had his secretary book out his afternoon. Upon getting to the Department of Licensing, he was greeted by a person who asked if he needed English or Spanish. English. He was directed to the appropriate counter and was done in five minutes. He then asked, "What has changed?"

The turn-around happened due to a new manager who moved his desk into the lobby. Blanchard

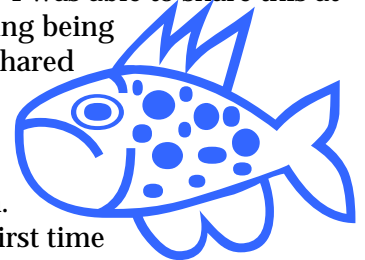
 described a manager as a person who reorganizes departments upon the changing needs of the customer. Our jobs are continually changing, and each and every one of us adapts to meet those needs.

One of our hospital's biggest changes was to implement the *Fish Sticks* video into our culture. Imagine an Administrator throwing a five foot stuffed fish into the audience, while they are eating fish crackers and playing with three-inch fish squirters. It happened here



in Forks. It took us a while to figure out the presentation, but it still seems to carry on. Fish stickers are given to people who go above and beyond the call of duty, fish posters popped up around the hospital, and inflatable fish are transferred between departments.

It was with great joy I was able to share this at Region 11 with the closing being given by Harry Paul. I shared what we were doing and then I had to stand up and catch a fish named "Pete" the perch.



Of course I missed the first time and had to do it again, but everyone got a laugh out of it. Another hospital came up with a great idea that I also shared. They have a box called the "Attitude Box." When you see someone with an attitude that needed to be changed, they have to pick out a new attitude! What a great concept. After the presentation, we had the drawings for the baskets and the trip to Hawaii. No, I didn't win, but came home energized!

**PLAY - MAKE THEIR DAY - BE THERE
CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE**

www.waakhfma.org

Contributing Writers

James Alderson
Michael Cross
Julie Meek
Tom Muller
Corey Shank
Anne Stallard

THANK YOU!!!

Confessions of a

WHISTLEBLOWER by James F. Alderson

To my HFMA friends:

During the last three years I have had the opportunity to present to the Hawaii, Oregon, Montana and Washington/Alaska chapters. Each time everyone wanted to know “how the story ends.” I thought I would use the chapter newsletter to give your members “the rest of the story” in the Quorum case.

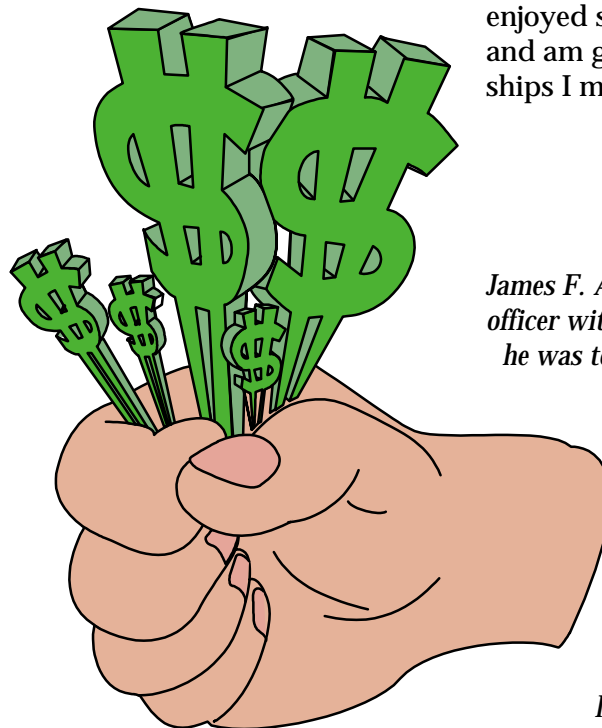
The main case against HCA is still ongoing. HCA settled several other suits (different issues) but the one on cost reporting is still in progress.

Quorum reached a settlement with the Department of Justice in October of 2000 for the sum of \$85 million. They paid the DOJ the \$85 million and I got paid a partial share on May 16, 2001, which was coincidentally my 31st anniversary.

The False Claims Act allows the relator (aka whistleblower) and attorneys a minimum of 15%. There is an additional 10% available depending on the efforts of the relator and his counsel.

The DOJ offered me a total of

17%, which was the minimum of 15% and an additional 2% for my efforts. We felt this was not fair given the circumstances and



wound up in court against the DOJ to let a judge decide the amount.

A grueling two-day trial was held in Tampa on May 31 and June 1, 2001. In October the judge announced his decision. He granted me 24%. The judge’s opinion is on my attorneys’ website for those who may wish to read it. Go to www.phillipsandcohen.com, click on what’s new, click on the Quorum story, and click on the link “landmark decision” in the

second paragraph.

This will give a detailed look at the last three years and hopefully you will find it interesting. I enjoyed speaking to your chapter and am grateful for the friendships I made.

Jim Alderson

James F. Alderson was a financial officer with a Montana hospital when he was told that the hospital’s

management company routinely filed fraudulent cost reports with Medicare. He was fired after he refused to file “aggressive” claims that the company knew were not reimbursable.

His False Claims Act lawsuit against that company — Quorum Health

Resources Inc. — and Columbia/HCA Healthcare Corp. helped lead to the largest government investigation of Medicare fraud ever. The Justice Department joined the qui tam lawsuit in October 1998. This is an excerpt from a story about Alderson by Kurt Eichenwald that appeared in The New York Times on Oct. 18, 1998. (“He blew the whistle, and health giants quaked.”) Editors note: This section taken from Phillips and Cohen website. ■

Washington Alaska HFMA Annual Survey

by Michael Cross
Northwest Hospital

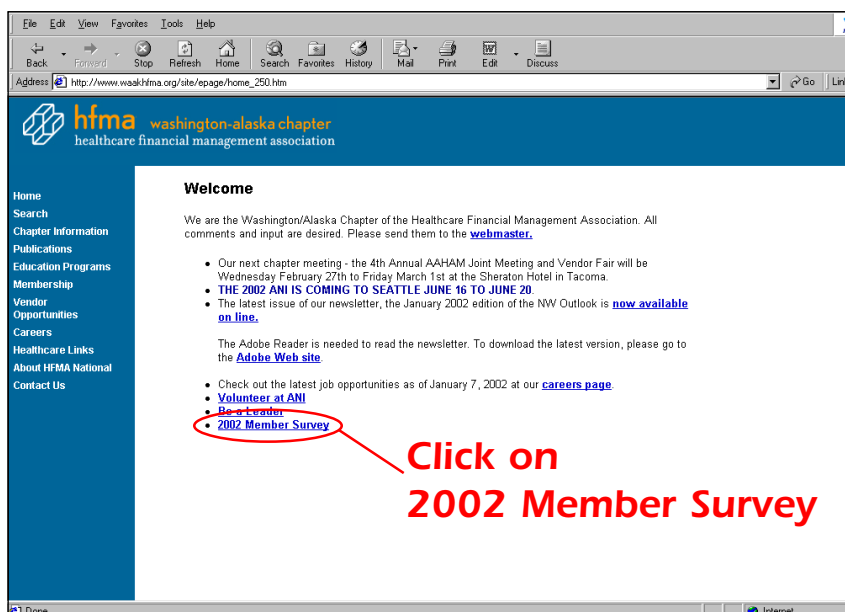
Thousands of dollars in cash and prizes...well, not really, but now that I have your attention, would you please complete the 2002 Annual Survey? Cheap trick, I know, but we really want to know what you want from your chapter.

Look for a 2002 Survey link on the chapter website in early February. It will be available throughout the month of February. Check out the website's new look while you are there.

How do you participate in the survey?

- 1) Use your internet browser to go to the chapter website at:
<http://www.waakhfma.org>.
- 2) On the home page, click on the link labeled, "2002 Survey." If you don't see the link yet, don't panic, we will notify you by email when 2002 Survey link is live on the website.
- 3) Have your HFMA (national) member identification number handy. Your response is confidential, but we use your national HFMA member identification number for validation.
- 4) Answer the questions, and follow the directions to finalize your response.

Why is the survey important? The Annual Survey is the beginning of the strategic planning process for the coming year. Each year at this time the members are surveyed. Responses are accumulated and presented to the board of directors. In April or May there will be a mini-LTC (Leadership Training Council) held for both outgoing and new board members. Decisions are then made for the following



The Washington/Alaska Chapter's Website. Your input is important!

year's strategic plan. The survey is an important source of member input used in this planning process.

In past years, the survey was a manual process involving mailing to and from participants, and the manual compilation of results. Starting last year, the survey was placed on the website. For comparability of data, the questions are the same as last year.

If you have an email address listed with the national HFMA, we will be sending you a notification by email when the survey has been added to the website. We will send a reminder notice a few weeks later. If you do not have an email address, or if it hasn't been updated, we are hoping you are reading this article!

Thanks for your input! ■

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

THE ANNUAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE IS COMING!

HFMA's Annual National Institute (ANI) for the first time ever is coming to the Pacific Northwest June 16-20, 2002 at the Washington State Trade and Convention Center in Seattle. The Washington/Alaska Chapter, as the host chapter, is responsible for providing volunteers to assist this year at ANI. Many volunteers are needed for the following services (feel free to volunteer for more than one area):

Course Coordinators - This is the biggest responsibility. The coordinators will be needed Monday-Wednesday 7:00 am-5:30 pm, with Sunday all day session optional. Volunteers will be able to attend education events with free registration. Up to 30 volunteers will be needed. HFMA National will try to match course coordinator assignments with the coordinators' choices as closely as possible.

Friday June 14 Conference Bag Stuffing - This is a 4-6 hour commitment. This will be a fun time preparing conference bags for ANI attendees. Snacks will be provided. Up to 20 volunteers will be needed.

Information Booths - This is a 2-3 hour commitment for each volunteer. There are two booths: one to answer conference attendees' questions and the other to exchange banquet tickets. The booth will be staffed Saturday through Wednesday. Up to 44 volunteers will be needed depending on the coverage required by National HFMA.

If you are willing to help and have not already signed up at one of our meetings, please contact Julie Meek, ANI Committee Chair. Please specify what volunteer work area (s) you would like. Julie may be contacted at Kadlec Medical Center, 888 Swift Blvd., Richland, WA or (509) 942-2708 or meekj@kadlecmed.org.

Please feel free to help out in more than one area.



hfma washington / alaska chapter
healthcare financial management association

Job Opportunities

TITLE	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
Accounting Manager	St. John's Regional Medical Center	Oxnard, CA
Billing Center Manager	Apria Healthcare	Portland, OR
Billing Manager	Integrated Medical Management, Inc.	Las Vegas, NV
Business Office Manager	Mayers Memorial Hospital	Fall River Mills, CA
Chief Financial Officer	Office of Mental Health & Addiction	Portland, OR
Chief Financial Officer	Huntington Beach Community Clinic	Huntington Beach, CA
Chief Financial Officer	Clinical laboratory	Seattle, WA
Chief Financial Officer	Lucile Packard Children's Hospital	Palo Alto, CA
Chief Financial Officer	Mount San Rafael Hospital	Trinidad, CO
Clinic Administrator	Idaho Pulmonary Associates	Boise, ID
Collections Manager	Revcare	Las Vegas, NV
Controller	Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corp.	Bethel, AK
Controller	Not-for-profit hospital	Southern CA
Coordinator, Revenue Cycle Management Program	Harborview Medical Center	Seattle, WA
Corporate Compliance Officer	Lucile Packard Children's Hospital	Palo Alto, CA
Director Health Info., Pat. Acctg., Admissions	Madera Community Hospital	Madera, CA
Director of Finance	NorthBay Healthcare	Fairfield, CA
Director of Managed Care Contracting	InSight Health Services Corp.	Las Vegas, NV
Director of Patient Financial Services	Sacred Heart Medical Center	Spokane, WA
Director of Patient Financial Services	Large hospital	West side Washington
Director of Patient Financial Services	160-bed NFP acute care hospital	Boise, ID
Director of Patient Financial Services	Multicare Health System	Tacoma, WA
Director, Admission, Regis. & Business Office	St. John's Health Center	Santa Monica, CA
Financial Analyst III	Lucile Packard Children's Hospital	Palo Alto, CA
Financial Consultant	MultiCare Health System	Tacoma, WA
Manager of Billing and Accounts Receivable	Sutter Connect (Physician practice)	Sacramento, CA
MSO Director	Merle West Medical Center	Klamath Falls, OR
MSO Director	Columbia Basin Hospital	Ephrata, WA
Patient Financial Services Director	Airlift Northwest	Seattle, WA
Payroll Manager	Harborview Medical Center	Seattle, WA
Product Management position	Oracle Corporation	Redwood Shores, CA
Regional Chief Financial Officer	PeaceHealth	Longview, WA
Reimbursement Manager	Providence Services-Eastern Washington	Spokane, WA
Reimbursement Manager	Community Medical Centers	Fresno, CA
Senior Accountant	Virginia Mason Medical Center	Seattle, WA
Senior Accountant	Healthcare	Bay Area, CA
Senior Analyst-Financial Planning and Dec. Support	Lucile Packard Children's Hospital	Palo Alto, CA
Senior Analyst-Managed Care	Lucile Packard Children's Hospital	Palo Alto, CA
Senior Staff Accountant	Island Hospital	Anacortes, WA
Sr. Hospital Finance Managers (for turnarounds)	Cambio Health Solutions, LLC	Western U.S.
Vice President/Chief Financial Officer	Enloe Health System	Chico, CA

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

...on these listings or to include a listing, please contact

Julie Meek, (509) 942-2708 or meekj@kadlecmed.org

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

EMER & Spenddown Issues Affecting Washington Hospitals

by Corey Shank, Pacific Medicaid Services

It has recently become evident that there is no clear understanding by the state (DSHS), and thus no clear understanding by Washington hospitals of how to correctly account for Medicaid recipients' Spenddown and/or EMER when submitting claims for payment. Resulting from this lack of clarity, hospitals are being held accountable for millions of dollars in overpayment by DSHS in the current auditing cycle.

The root of this problem is a lack of communication between the two integral components of DSHS: The CSO, which determines and processes eligibility, and MAA, which processes claims and remits payment to hospitals. Although there is some interface between the CSO and MAA in regards to patients' PIC (Personal Identification Code, used for billing), program of eligibility (MI, CNP, GAU, etc.) and dates of coverage; there is no relay of information regarding Patient Financial Responsibility (EMER, Spenddown).

EMER and Spenddown are related to two Medical Assistance Programs. The Medically Indigent Program, which is the primary program for emergency related hospital services and the Medically Needy Program.

EMER (Emergency Medical Expense Requirement) is only related to the Medically Indigent

Program (MI). Currently all recipients of MI must incur \$2000.00 in emergency related hospital expenses before eligibility can be processed by the CSO.

Spenddown is a term used to describe a deductible of sorts, or

Resulting from this lack of clarity, hospitals are being held accountable for millions of dollars in overpayment by DSHS in the current auditing cycle.

share of cost for medical services due to excess income or resources. Spenddown can be related to the MI program for recipients with excess income and resources, or the Medically Needy program for individuals with excess income. For detailed information about Washington Medical Assistance programs, see Understanding Washington State Medical Assistance Programs by David Cartier, Pacific Medicaid Services. A copy of this document can be found at www.pacificmedicaid.com/walinks.htm.

When a patient has eligibility processed for a program with an EMER and/or spenddown, the healthcare provider to which the CSO attributed the spenddown is responsible to deduct the appropriate amount on the claim sent to MAA.

How then, will a hospital know if they are responsible to make a deduction on the claim? This is where it is unclear and unsettling to many hospitals. Without coordination of information between MAA and the CSO, there is a huge potential for breakdown in the process of relaying spenddown/EMER information. The only apparent process is as follows: The CSO processes eligibility and generates an Award Letter that designates where Spenddown/EMER is attributed, and mails it to the patient. The patient in turn is responsible for providing the hospital a copy of the Award Letter in order to bill the claim correctly.

There are two major problems with this process, one obvious and one not. To start with, this process places responsibility first and foremost in the hands of the patient to relay information to the hospital, many of which do not understand the Award Letter and its importance to the hospital. This seems unfair; given the patient is not, and should not be required to know the process by which the hospital must comply with MAA.

Secondly, if a patient's spenddown/EMER is split among different hospitals, how does

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MAA know the correct attribution without the information from the CSO? The potential is that low-dollar accounts, which are entirely attributed to spenddown/EMER, are not billed to MAA. An example would be if Jane Doe goes to Hospital A's emergency room, and is then transferred to Hospital B. If the CSO approves Jane for MI, and she only has \$1000.00 in charges at Hospital A, her EMER would be split between Hospital A and Hospital B. Should Hospital A submit a claim to MAA for its account, even though after the deduction for EMER the billed amount would be \$0.00? Yes they should, would they? Maybe not, since it would be a waste of time, and they might not get the PIC to bill anyway. This has the potential to affect Hospital B in an audit situation. If Hospital B correctly bills its claim and deducts its portion of Jane's EMER from the claim, there still leaves \$1000.00 of the EMER to account for if Hospital A does not submit its claim to MAA.

As Washington hospitals are being held accountable for the deficient state system accounting for spenddown/EMER, there will need to be a focus to develop streamlined, or at least standard procedure that a hospital could use to contact the CSO and request a recipient's award letter. Because we all know that getting information from a CSO is at times neither streamlined nor standard.

Both the Washington State Hospital Association and Pacific Medicaid Services, Inc. continue to work with DSHS to develop understanding and best practices in this matter. Pacific Medicaid Services has a link on its site with an article called Understanding EMER and Spenddown at <http://www.pacificmedicaid.com/emerspenddown.htm>. For more information relating to this issue, contact Mary Bensen at WSHA (maryb@wsha.org) or Corey Shank at Pacific Medicaid Services, Inc. (cshank@pacificmedicaid.com). ■

CORPORATE ●●●●●●●● SPONSORS

The Chapter would like to thank the following companies for 2001 - 2002 sponsorships:

PLATINUM LEVEL

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HFMA certification is possible for everyone

Certification does not have to be simply a matter of location. Most people have heard the old joke that ends with the punch line “come to think of it, you can’t get there from here.” Often, however, HFMA members are proving that they can get their HFMA certification from almost anywhere.

For instance, one chapter member was not able to find a certified member near him to install the browser and administer the certification test to him. So, he instead installed the browser on his laptop himself. He then contacted his chapter, got a proctor near him, and took his laptop to the proctor’s office to take the exam. He passed. Now that he is a certified member and proctor, he’s taking certification on the road by being available to members at various locations throughout the chapter.

And now that all certified members can be proctors, mentors, and role models for certification, it is possible for a certified member to initiate certification activities where none previously existed.

HFMA has several examples of people who took the initiative to get things going in their individual chapters. Terri Fujii, CHFP, CPA, Hawaii Chapter, is one example. She personally has spearheaded at least one testing session a year in her chapter and has proctored several members for their certification.

Simply talking about certification can get the ball rolling. Randy Just, FHFMA, CPA, Idaho Chapter was the first winner of the new Certified Member Get A Certified Member Contest. He won a trip to HFMA’s ANI. Idaho has not had a strong penetration for certification in the past. Just customized the certification presentation for his chapter and offered to speak at a meeting. After his presentation, eight members said they wanted to test in the near future.

Importance of Certification

Important certification benefits include a potential salary increase. The most recent HFMA salary surveys show that CFOs with HFMA certifications earn over \$21,000 a year more than uncertified CFOs and that HFMA certified patient financial services (PFS) directors earn over \$17,000 a year more than uncertified PFS directors.

Also, the time investment for certification may be less than anticipated. An experienced healthcare financial manager will need to spend only 20 hours or less preparing for the core examination, and 16 hours or less preparing for a specialty exam. The exam questions now are drawn from the self-study courses designed to support the exams, so there is no longer a need to research independent resources. All the necessary information is in one place, in one course.

Consider Certification

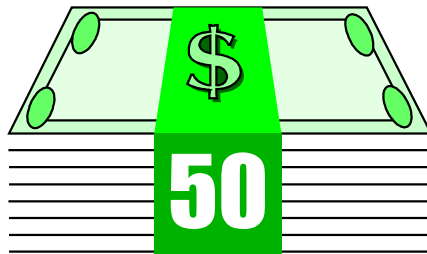
Certification is attainable, and every chapter is likely to have a proctor. Test times are arranged individually with the proctor, so many chapters offer testing on the weekend. If preferred, tests may be taken with a neighboring chapter or at the HFMA National offices. For additional information about HFMA certification or becoming a proctor, or to receive promotional and informational materials, contact WA/AK Chapter Membership Services Certification Chair Tom Muller, FHFMA at (360) 236-2415 tom.muller@doh.wa.gov or National Certification Bernadette Clark at (800) 252-4362, ext. 311, or bclark@hfma, or Pepper Zenger at ext. 308, or pzenger@hfma.org. ■

Attend LCC;

Win \$\$\$

by Tom Muller
Membership Services Chairman

At each chapter LCC meeting, one member in attendance will receive \$50 cash. Since officers and directors are not eligible to win the \$50, this increases the chances of winning for the other members attending. But, you must be present to win.



activities of the chapter. In addition, LCC meetings provide many networking opportunities.

Patrick Green, from Overlake Hospital Medical Center, won the \$50 at the September meeting for

Of course, there are many other benefits to participating in LCC councils and committees besides cash. LCC participants determine the programs and

his participation in Committee B. **Del Nord**, from Quality Reimbursement Services, won the \$50 at the December meeting for his participation in Committee A. You could be the next winner.

The next LCC meeting will be Wednesday, February 27th, at 5:00PM at the Tacoma Sheraton Hotel Plan on being there.



UPCOMING CHAPTER MEETINGS

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
HFMA Workshop, Meeting, & Vendor Fair	Feb 27 - Mar 1, 2002	Sheraton - Tacoma
HFMA Workshop	May 23, 2002	Embassy Suites - Seatac
HFMA National ANI Conference	June 16-20, 2002	Convention Center - Seattle
HFMA Workshop & Meeting	September 25-27, 2002	Campbells - Chelan
HFMA Workshop	December 5, 2002	Facility - TBD - Seatac
HFMA Region 11 Symposium	January, 2003	Caesars Palace Las Vegas
HFMA Workshop, Meeting, & Vendor Fair	February, 2003	Sheraton - Tacoma
HFMA Workshop & Meeting	May, 2003	Davenport Hotel - Spokane
HFMA Workshop & Meeting	September, 2003	Joint Mtg w/OR - Portland
HFMA Workshop	December, 2003	Facility - TBD - Seatac



Welcome New Members



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

David R. Klemetson
Director of Finance
Therapeutic Associates
Seattle, WA

Kurt F. Price
Vice President
HHS Inc
Olympia, WA

Malachy Moran
Sr Institutional Consultant
TIAA-CREF
Kirkland, WA

Ron Knorr
Manager Medicare Audit & Appeals
Premera Blue Cross
Mountlake Terrace, WA

Chukwuemeka N. Onokala
Financial Analyst
Department of Health & Human Services
Washington, DC

History Corner

FOLLOW UP

Only one member responded with an attempt to name the five members from the 1982 photograph that appeared in the January issue. The guess was mostly incorrect. The picture was taken by this Newsletter Editor at the 1982 Installation of Officers.



From left to right:

Ned Borgstrom, Secretary
Shirley Hondel, President-Elect
Ray Raines (my boss at the time), Immediate Past President
Lori Mitchell, Vice President
Hermann Goeppele, Treasurer
Hidden is **Dan Harden**, President

ATTENTION

Are you ready to take the HFMA certification test?

The time to prepare is now.

In June the Annual National Institute (ANI) will come to Seattle for the first time ever.

This is the ideal opportunity to earn your certification.

Call (800) 252-HFMA Extension 311 now.

To reserve your place at the testing sight.

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

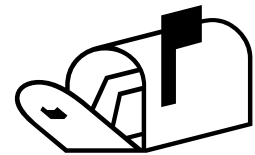
Telephone: (360) 236-4215

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
Mount Carmel Hospital
982 E. Columbia
Colville WA 99114

Phone:
509-685-2406

E-mail
rhoadev@mtcarmelhospital.org

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Mark Your Calendar

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2002

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Workshop & Meeting & Vendor Fair

Sheraton Tacoma Hotel

- Joint Session with AAHAM
- Guest Speakers

SEE YOU THERE!

www.waakhfma.org



Published bi-monthly by the Washington/Alaska
Chapter of HFMA

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