

Summer 2006-07

Bama Chatter

The Newsletter of the Alabama Chapter
Healthcare Financial Management Association

The 2006 Alabama Annual Institute *Beach Report*

A wonderful time was had by all at the Alabama Chapter's Annual Institute held in June in beautiful Destin, Florida.

We had an opportunity to learn a lot from a great array of speakers as well as having the time to get to know each other better. The beach trip to Destin was relaxing, fun and educational all at the same time.



New Officers and Board Members Installed at Annual Institute: (Back, L to R) Dawn Walton, Kim Shrewsbury, Richard Byerly, Jeff Peppers, Linda Maddox, Sheila Hamby, Jeff Burkhardt, Paul Graham, Libby Bailey. (Front L to R) Donna Ellenburg (standing in for Vicki Parks) and Yolanda Rich

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2006-2007

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Courage

IN LEADERSHIP



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Please consult with the editor for the best way to send your ad electronically. Deadline for publication is shown below. *Bama Chatter* is published quarterly and is posted on the Chapter website at alabamahfma.org for approximately 650 members.

Publication Schedule

ISSUE	DEADLINE	ISSUE	DEADLINE
June (Summer)	May 20th	December (Winter)	November 20th
September (Fall)	August 20th	March (Spring)	February 20th

The statements and opinions appearing in articles are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of HFMA, the Alabama Chapter, or the editor. The editor strongly encourages submission of material for publication. Articles should be submitted to the editor by the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. The editor reserves the right to edit materials and accept or reject contributions whether solicited or not. Readers are invited to comment on any of the published material. Letters to the editor must be signed and are subject to condensation and editing. All rights reserved.

ANNUAL INSTITUTE -- Destin, Florida, June 2006

Pictorial...



Networking in Exhibit Hall



Waiting for Sand Castle Judging



I am going to build the biggest sand castle!!



Sand Castle Contest



Thanks to President-Elect Kim Shrewsbury for a great meeting!



Registration Desk



*Many Thanks to Our 2005-2006 Diamond Sponsors!
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGES

A Fond Farewell...

Whew!!! What a year! In the mist of two health systems integrating, my daughter's freshman year of college, and being the President of HFMA, I did not realize how good a year it was until the June 18, 2006 ANI (Annual National Institute) 53rd Annual Chapter Presidents Dinner in Orlando, Florida. Alabama received **six Yergers** and **three Awards of Excellence**. Congratulations to the Oklahoma Chapter for winning the Shelton Award for five consecutive years of sustained excellence.

Alabama submitted seven Yerger applications. Three of the seven were multi-chapter Yergers; two with Georgia and one with Tennessee. Special thanks to Jeffery Burkhardt and Stephanie Martin for submitting winning Yergers. Alabama's winning Yergers were *Student Membership* (Jeffery Burkhardt), *Summer Institute* (Stephanie Martin) and *What a Difference a Team Makes* (Yolanda Rich). Awards of Excellence were received in Membership Growth and Retention (Gold), Education (Silver), and New Member Retention (Gold). Over 100 new members joined the Alabama Chapter during fiscal year 2006.

The success of this year is attributable to many individuals. The Alabama Chapter is known for its strong leadership and commitment to excellence. I would like to publicly thank Craig Tolbert, Vice President of the Fall Institute, Esther Jones and Jeff Burkhardt, Vice Presidents of the Spring Institute, Stephanie Martin, Vice President of the Summer Institute, Dawn Walton, the incoming President, Annual Institute, Linda Maddox and Robert Frohlich, Chairs of the Patient Finance Services Forum, Maron Boohaker, Chair of the Compliance Forum, Libby Bailey, Chair of the Chief Financial Officers Forum, Mitzi Winters, Technology Chair, Jennifer Kingry, *Bama Chatter* Editor, Richard Byerly, Sponsorship Chair, Bryan

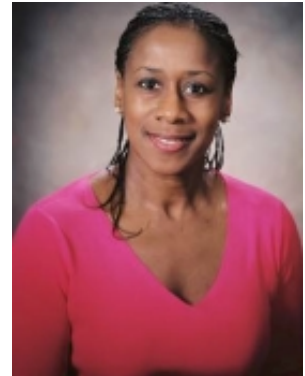
Karson, Certification Chair and all of the officers.

As this fiscal year begins, Dawn Walton the incoming President is fired up with new ideas and new ways of doing things. I'm excited about the changes that Dawn will be implementing. Change shows the chapter's ability to adapt to the economic challenges as well as the chapter's ongoing commitment to excellence and strong leadership. Alabama may be only a few years away from achieving the Shelton Award. I know under Dawn's leadership, we are guaranteed another year of sustained excellence.

This closes a chapter of my life but my involvement and commitment with HFMA will continue. I was humbled with my recent appointment to the National Advisory Council (NAC). I will also continue to work with the Alabama Compliance Forum. I have been actively involved with this chapter for over ten years and it has been both rewarding and exciting. The network of relationships that I have developed through my involvement in HFMA has been wonderful for me both personally and professionally.

Don't wait for someone to pick up the phone to ask for your participation. You make the call or send the email to the chapter's President or one of the Vice Presidents or Forum Leaders and let them know that you want to be an HFMA volunteer. I promise it will be rewarding, humbling and educational.

Yolanda Rich



*Yolanda D. Rich, Past President
Alabama Chapter HFMA*



Looking Forward to 2006-07



*Dawn H. Walton, CPA, President
Alabama Chapter HFMA*

If you didn't attend this year's Annual Institute, you really missed a great meeting. Holding with tradition, the speakers and topics were great. But, the beach party on Wednesday night was awesome! The fireworks were a special treat and won't soon be forgotten.

Many thanks to Kim Shrewsbury and her team for their hard work and many hours spent planning all of the week's activities.

If you didn't attend this year's Annual Institute, you may be asked why not? I have asked Eric Jeffries to chair the Quality Committee. The Board has charged him with the task of following up with a sample of those who attended the meeting to uncover "the good, the bad and the ugly," but also to follow up with some of you who didn't attend to find out what is keeping you away. We want to provide the best educational opportunities to our members. However, we have to know what you need, when you need it. We used to ascertain these things through our annual membership survey. However, National

HFMA now conducts that survey on our behalf every two years. We think we need more timely information so that we can be proactive and not just reactive. So, if you get a call or an email from our Quality Committee please help us out by giving us your honest opinions. If you are not contacted but would like to share your thoughts, please email or call Eric Jeffries or me directly.

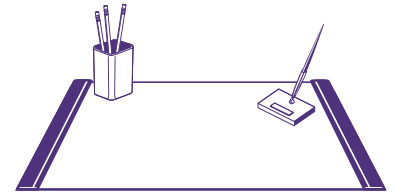
This year's theme is "Courage in Leadership." For me courage means that we dare try some new things and not just do the same things. We received the results of the membership survey conducted by National last year. Based on the comments and suggestions provided by our membership, we are making some changes this year to our educational programming. We will not be hosting the Winter or Summer Institutes this HFMA year but plan to focus more on topic specific programs through our forums, bringing more of these opportunities to your local area. We would love to hear about any issues that you need more information on. Chances are if you have questions others do as well. Please email your forum leaders or me to give us your ideas.

I think we are going to have great year. We certainly started off the year with a BANG!

Dawn Walton



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



by Jennifer Kingry, CPA
Publications Committee Chairperson

Thanks to all the contributing authors for technical articles in the *Bama Chatter* over the last year. We appreciate your time and your willingness to share your thoughts on topics that affect us all.

Julie Gheitantschi and Mitzi Winters, MedAssist, Incorporated - "Section 1101 Q&A"

Ross Comeaux, PricewaterhouseCoopers - "Acts of Charity, Charity Care Strategies for Hospitals in a Changing Landscape"

Dennis Simmons, SWACHA - The Electronic Payments Resource - "Catch 'Em if You Can, Preventing Payment Fraud"

Tedra Bonar, HealthSouth Corporation - The 2006 OIG Work Plan

Lance Loria, Loria Associates, LLC - "Financial Performance of Medical Groups Declined in 2004"

When you write articles for the *Bama Chatter*, you not only earn Founder's points that apply towards your certification, but you also become eligible for cash prize. This year's winner of the \$100.00 cash prize is Ross Comeaux.



Thanks again to all of you!
Jennifer Kingry, CPA



Member Milestones . . .

CONGRATULATIONS ON NEW ADDITIONS!

Dawn and Ted Walton are the proud parents of a wonderful baby girl - Margaret Louise. She was born on April 18th and is fondly called Maggie. Congratulations to big sisters Anne Elizabeth and Ellen.



Brian Naugher and his wife, Vicki and their son, Drew adopted a little baby girl from China recently. This beautiful fifteen month old is named Abigail Lynn Li. and her given name is Jen Li Jong - which means Beautiful Princess. Brian and Vicki traveled to China and officially received her on May 15th.



ALABAMA JOB BANK



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Catawba Valley Medical Center of Hickory, North Carolina is seeking a Director of Business Services. Catawba Valley Medical Center, formerly Catawba Memorial Hospital, is a 258-bed facility that employs over 1,400 employees, www.catawbavalleymedical.org. The successful candidate will be a strong leader with 10+ years Business Services experience and proven success with A/R management solutions. 3+ years of management experience is required. Meditech patient accounting system experience is a plus. If interested, send resume to davy@andersonexecsearch.com or call 704-347-0090.

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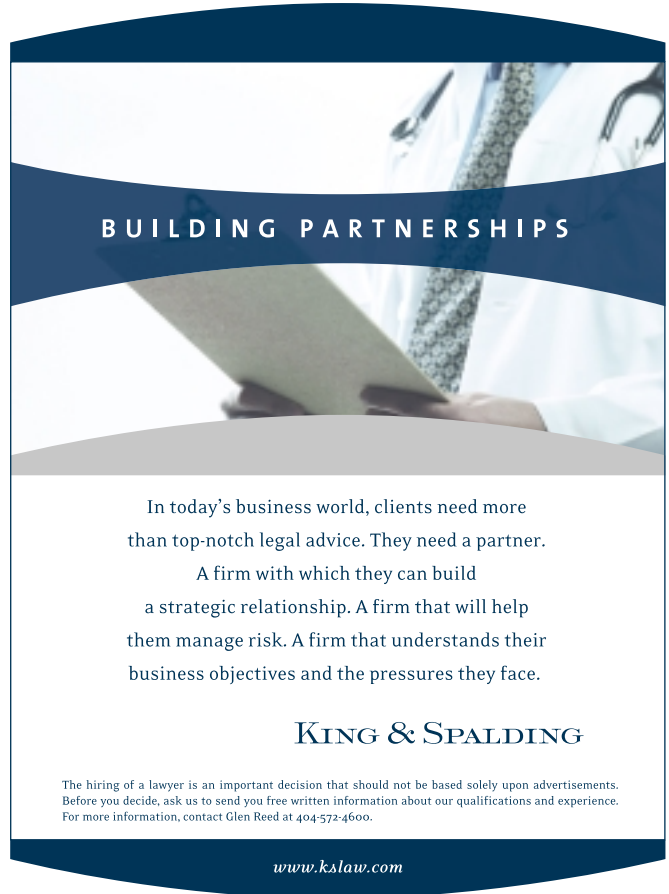
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ACCOUNTING / DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTING & FINANCE

Jupiter Medical Center, a 120-bed, acute care facility located on the beautiful East coast of South Florida just outside of West Palm, seeks a qualified candidate for the position of Director of Accounting & Finance. The successful candidate will report to the Chief Financial Officer and will be skilled in monitoring and overseeing all aspects of the Finance & Accounting Department. Qualifications: must have a BS or BA in Accounting; MBA and/or CPA licensure required; must have 5 or more years experience in an acute care setting and 10 years of accounting experience with progressively increased responsibilities; in depth knowledge of financial report preparation and statements, annual audit, payroll preparation, vendor payments. If interested, send resume to davy@andersonexecsearch.com or call 704-347-0090.



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2006 SPRING INSTITUTE RECAP

March 15-17, 2006 • Embassy Suites • Birmingham, Alabama

by Jeffrey Burkhardt & Esther Jones

The 2006 Spring Institute was at the Embassy Suites in Birmingham on March 15 – 17. There were 136 people who registered for the Institute, but tax season and March Madness prevented them from all being able to stay for the entire event. Because Hurricane Katrina forced the cancellation of the Southern Institute and Winter Institute, the Spring Institute was needed to fill the void that the cancellation of those events created in available CPE credits. Consequently, a third day of educational opportunities was added to the normally two day event, with pre-Institute workshops on Patient Financial Services topics being held on the Wednesday before the official start of the Spring Institute.



Those attending the workshops enjoyed two hour sessions from Sheila Boyce of AHC on *The Uninsured: A Growing Cost to Hospitals*, from Esther Jones and Linda Coogan on *Reimbursement and Quality*, and from Shirley Dawson, also of AHC, on *Insurance Reimbursement Law*. Each was well received, but especially the *Insurance Reimbursement Law* session, with many participants requesting that it be repeated during the “roadshows” being presented throughout the year. The workshops were also visited by 35 student members from the UAB masters and doctoral programs in Health Administration. These sessions provided a wonderful opportunity for the student members to gain a glimpse of what educational opportunities are available through HFMA.

The Spring Institute began with Rowdy Gaines, an Olympic triple gold medalist swimmer, as the keynote speaker. His interesting, humorous, inspirational, and insightful presentation entitled *Dedication Through the Peaks and Valleys of Life Determine a Champion* motivated all in attendance to work harder at their respective jobs, and to realize that it is never too late to achieve their dreams. Following Rowdy, Joseph Ritchey, an attorney from Sirote & Permutt, gave a presentation on the *Arbitration/Mediation Basics for Healthcare Providers*.



A wonderful lunch of steak and shrimp was accompanied by a speaker, Bobby Humphrey, a former University of Alabama and NFL running back, who delighted the audience with his story on *The Will to Win is Greater than the Win Itself*. He helped us realize that while the win is important, the drive, or will, to win is what accomplishes long-term success in our careers.

The afternoon was filled with PFS and CFO breakout sessions, interspersed with visits to the big screen television to check the score of the Alabama vs Marquette NCAA basketball game. The PFS track presentations were *Point of Service Collections* - Donilda McMahan and Debbie Thompson (Baptist Health System, Inc.), *When the Revenue Cycle is Broken* (AIM), *Transforming the Revenue Cycle* - Cynthia Sansone (Siemens Medical Solutions),

and *Blue Cross Updates* from the always entertaining J.E. Avrard (Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Alabama.)

The topics of the CFO breakout sessions were *Where Have All the Dollars Gone?* – Cynthia DuPree (Draffin & Tucker, LLP), *It May Be Low-Hanging Fruit But Somebody Must Pick It: Handheld Decision Support Tools, Quality & Resource Utilization* – Gerald Glandon (University of Alabama at Birmingham), *Developing and Funding Growth Strategies* – Perry White (Pershing Yoakley & Associates), and *Tax-Exempt Financing for Healthcare Organizations* - J. Hobson “Hobby” Presley (Presley, Burton & Collier.)



Friday for the Institute was started with Forum Breakfasts, starting breakfast at the unheard of (and unattended) hour of 7:00, with the speakers starting their presentations at the more reasonable hour of 7:30. The Compliance Forum received an instructional session on *Deficit Reduction Act of 2005: Some Win, Some Lose, Compliance Required???* - Jolee Bollinger (HealthSouth). The PFS Forum had a *PFS Committee Update* – Linda Maddox (MedAssist Inc.) and the CFO Forum learned about the *Impact of Registration Accuracy on the Revenue Cycle* – Paul Shorrosh (Database Solutions, Inc.)



Our keynote speaker for Friday morning was Joanne McGlown, author, speaker, and consultant on disaster management, whose presentation was *Disasters! Management Challenges in Assuring Viability of Your Healthcare Organization*. She highlighted many of the challenges that healthcare financial managers should be addressing to prepare for the potential natural and not-so-natural disasters

of the future.

Bob McCoy (STG) shared insights into *Moving Paper to Digital*, and the conference educational sessions were drawn to a close by Rob Ferrill (HealthSouth) who, realizing that he was standing between the attendees and door prizes, presented a discussion of *Trends and Technologies for Achieving Compliance Objectives – A Perspective from Information Security*.



As this was our first opportunity to participate in the planning of one of the Alabama Chapter's Institutes, we didn't realize the significant role that our sponsors have in providing the funding to make these events possible, and want to thank them for their continued support. We are also grateful for Yolanda Rich and Mitzi Winters, who answered an endless stream of questions, Mitzi,



Sherri Harper, and Teresa Bradley who helped with the registration process, and the other officers and members who so willingly helped when called upon. The efforts of each of you continue to make the Alabama chapter one of the premier chapters in HFMA, and provide training to the healthcare financial management leaders of Alabama.



The 2006–2007 Alabama Chapter HFMA Membership Recruitment Campaign



“Ride the Wave of Recruitment”

Cowabunga Dudes! It’s that time again. This year’s recruitment campaign is sure to be gnarlacious! We are going to ride the wave of recruitment this year so lets hit the surf and make it mondo. We have some awesome prizes this year. Who will be this year’s Big Kahuna? Let’s get stoked—SURF’S UP!

This year’s prizes include:

For the bro or bunny recruiting the most new members during the first quarter of this year’s campaign:

Four passes to Alabama Adventure Water Park.



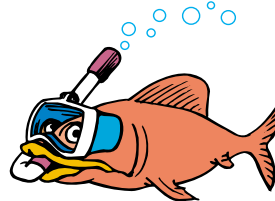
For the bro or bunny recruiting the most new members during the second quarter of this year’s campaign:



Four passes for canoeing at Alabama Small Boats.

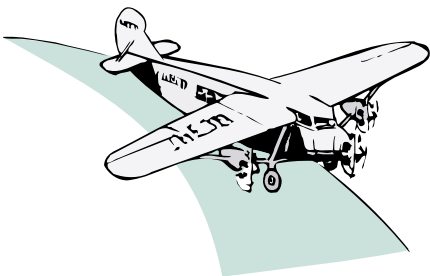
For the bro or bunny recruiting the most new members during the third quarter of the campaign:

Four passes to the Georgia Aquarium.



AND TO THE BIG KAHUNA!!!!

Two airline tickets to anywhere in the continental US.



***Student membership will not count toward this year’s campaign prizes. The person recruiting the most student members will receive a \$250 cash prize.**

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF MEDICAL GROUPS

Declined in 2004

by Lance S. Loria, CPA, FACHE, FAAMA

The Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) recently released the 2005 Cost Survey which is based on 2004 data. This year's survey marks the beginning of a split into two detailed reports for multi-specialty practices and single-specialty practices. The MGMA continued the practice of separately identifying hospital-owned and physician-owned practices separately.

Following years of declining revenues coupled with increasing costs, the result is declining margins for primary care medical group practices. Internal Medicine single specialty groups experienced a decline in margin of 5.5 percent to less than \$202,000 and Primary Care multi-specialty groups not owned by hospitals saw a decrease in margin of 3.9 percent to just over \$217,000. The trend in declining margins existed among all specialties, although there were variations in the amounts.

Performance differed by ownership for multi-specialty practices. Cost controls seemed to be more effective for hospital-owned multi-specialty practices whereas revenue growth was better for physician-owned multi-specialty practices. Single-specialty practices continued to experience professional liability cost increases in 2004 (with the exception of anesthesiology) which put pressure on margins.

For hospitals and health systems that either own medical practices or have plans to acquire

them, the message is clear. Efficient practice management coupled with a focused revenue growth strategy is required. Implementing productivity metrics for the physician performance evaluation can have a favorable result on margin. Managing the number and type of physicians recruited to markets can also impact performance.

The weakening operating performance trends should not be overlooked when buying or selling practices. The documented unfavorable trend on physician practice margins may be used in negotiations as an adjustment to reduce purchase price. On the other hand, when selling a practice, cost controls and revenue growth should be emphasized.

Whenever possible, differentiate the practice being sold from the MGMA "averages" by gaining an understanding of the

MGMA cost survey data. Since survey participation is voluntary, the results may not be representative of the industry. The 2005 Cost Survey can be purchased from the MGMA by calling 877-275-6542, ext. 888, or by going online at www.mgma.com/store.

Lance S. Loria, CPA, FACHE, FAAMA, is President of Loria Associates, LLC, in Houston. He has 33 years of health care industry experience. Lance is an advanced member of HFMA, and recipient of the Founders Medal of Honor Award for outstanding career service. He is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives; and Fellow of the American Academy of Medical Administrators. He is a frequent author and speaker on health care industry topics. Lance can be contacted for questions regarding this article at lanceloria@aol.com.



*Thank you to Lance S. Loria, CPA and the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter for sharing this article!
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FALL 2006

September 15, 2006

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November 15-17, 2006

FALL INSTITUTE

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CPAs and a possible study session for upcoming certifications.*

For details & to register for upcoming meetings, go to alabamahfma.org

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