

## The AHA Certification Center Achieves Historic Milestone – 5,000<sup>th</sup> Certification is Awarded

On April 23, 2009, the AHA Certification Center (AHA-CC) issued its 5,000<sup>th</sup> certification, signaling its success in accomplishing its mission to administer the healthcare industry's premier certification programs. The first AHA Certification was awarded less than nine years ago. Today, there are over 7,500 candidates for AHA Certification and many hospitals, healthcare agencies and providers of services to the healthcare industry require their staff members to hold AHA Certification. What accounts for the tremendous growth in the AHA Certification Programs? AHA-CC Executive Director, Maribeth Casey, explains, "AHA Certification Programs are a win-win-win. They provide hospitals and healthcare agencies with a proven professional development tool to 'win' in retaining and recruiting qualified professional staff. Certification also is a 'win' for the certificant who is motivated to increase job knowledge and demonstrate mastery of a well defined body of knowledge. And patients 'win' by receiving knowledgeable and skilled care from AHA certificants."



The awarding of its 5,000<sup>th</sup> certification was a substantial accomplishment for the AHA-CC, but it also was a great personal achievement for the professional who earned it. The milestone certification was a Certified Materials & Resource Professional (CMRP) credential awarded to Becky Walkinshaw, Purchasing Manager at The Ohio State University Medical Center (OSUMC) located in Columbus, Ohio. OSUMC is an academic medical center that includes a 1,000 bed inpatient setting, in addition to multiple outpatient facilities throughout central Ohio. As Purchasing Manager, Ms. Walkinshaw oversees the management of purchasing procedures and process improvement. Attaining the CMRP is only one of her many accomplishments. In 2008, she received a Master's of Labor and Human Resources from The Fisher College of Business at The Ohio State University.

### The Path to Attaining AHA Certification

In a recent interview, Ms. Walkinshaw described her path to achieving certification and shared some advice for others who are considering AHA Certification.

*Q. How long have you worked as a materials and resource professional?*

A. I completed a B.S. in Allied Health Professions-Health Sciences Management at The Ohio State University in 2005 and shortly thereafter began working in Materials Management and Purchasing at OSUMC.

*Q. What interested you about the field?*

A. Healthcare is a fast-moving and fascinating field, and I have always wanted to work in a world- renowned healthcare facility. The two directors I have been lucky enough to work with at OSUMC have been excellent mentors and helped me to find my career path in supply chain management. It's an area I had no experience in prior to working at OSUMC, but I found that it fit with my interests in math, new technologies, and partnering with every department in the hospital. I particularly enjoy working in cross-functional teams.

Q. *Why did you choose to become AHA certified?*

A. Being certified keeps me on the cutting edge of healthcare materials management. The focus of my job is on purchasing, but purchasing is just one element of supply chain management. Becoming certified required that I learn about the other elements of supply chain management so that I would be up to speed in the field. And certification renewal requires that I remain current in supply chain management.

Q. *How long ago did you decide that you wanted to pursue AHA Certification?*

A. I made the decision in 2007 when I attended my first Association for Healthcare Resource & Materials Management conference. At the conference, I became more familiar with other areas of supply chain management – outside of purchasing – and realized I wanted to learn more about these areas. Also, at the conference they honored those who had recently become certified and it seemed that everyone I met who was a director was certified. I thought AHA Certification could further my career in the long term, if I wanted to become a director. In addition, my director wants all of us to be certified, so we decided to include attaining the CMRP as one of my performance goals. I applied for AHA Certification as soon as I had enough experience to be eligible.

Q. *How did you prepare for the certification process?*

A. The *Materials Management Review Guide* was my study and review resource, especially the chapter quizzes. I also found the CMRP overview webinar to be very helpful.

Q. *What were the most challenging aspects of preparing for certification?*

A. Finding time among my work and personal priorities to study for the exam. But I treated preparing for the certification as just another project I had to work on. I created a project plan and calendar and figured out what I needed to do each week until the exam date.

Q. *Do you have any advice or tips for others who are considering AHA Certification or currently preparing for the Certification Examination?*

A. Set a date to take the exam and schedule a testing time in advance so that you don't keep pushing it off into the future. I took my exam in March and set goals to review one chapter every week prior to the exam.

Q. *How do you think your certification will impact your career?*

A. Being certified shows my employer that I'm serious about my career in materials management and committed to being in the forefront of my field. Hopefully, this will increase the chances that I will be considered for new job opportunities when they arise.

### An Employer's Perspective on the Value of AHA Certification

Ms. Walkinshaw's supervisor, John Ballard, C.P.M., MBA, Director of Strategic Sourcing and Purchasing for OSUMC, praised her accomplishment, noting that she is the first in her department to receive the CMRP. And he hopes her colleagues will follow her example. The purchasing department at OSUMC has been striving to achieve higher levels of excellence, and Mr. Ballard believes that one way to accomplish this is by encouraging staff to obtain additional education and pursue certification. "Preparing for and challenging the CMRP Examination promotes awareness of materials management and supports excellence in supply chain management. Obtaining the CMRP demonstrates a high level of knowledge and proficiency in healthcare supply chain management."

## Looking Toward the Future

Executive Director Casey sums up the importance of the AHA-CC's recent milestone, "Recognizing our 5,000<sup>th</sup> certificant is a hallmark for the AHA Certification Center. In 2000, we started as four small Certification Programs and in less than a decade have come to exemplify the highest standards for non-licensed healthcare professionals. We cannot wait to recognize our 7,500<sup>th</sup> certificant."

### **Fast Facts About the AHA-CC**

- The AHA Certification Center (AHA-CC) was created in 1998 in response to requests from personal membership societies of the American Hospital Association for a mechanism to provide certification for managers of non-licensed healthcare disciplines. Development of the first four Programs began in mid-1999, with introduction of the Examinations in mid-2000. The fifth Program, CAVS, joined the AHA-CC in January 2008.

- The AHA Certification Center currently operates five Programs:

CAVS – Certified Administrator of Volunteer Services

CHESP – Certified Healthcare Environmental Services Professional

CHFM – Certified Healthcare Facility Manager

CMRP – Certified Materials & Resource Professional

CPHRM – Certified Professional in Healthcare Risk Management

Beginning in 2008, the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) contracted with the AHA-CC for quality assurance and project management services in support of AONE's Certified in Executive Nursing Practice and Certified Nurse Manager and Leader programs.

- The first AHA Certifications were awarded in June 2000.
- To date, the AHA has certified over 5,105 individuals across the five Programs.

For more information about AHA Certifications please visit the website of [www.aha.org/certification](http://www.aha.org/certification).