



# The Monitor

## From Your President

There's a movie or Broadway show tune that has as a part of its lyrics, "it's a new dawn, a new day, and a new year".

That's true, it's all new, from how our government is perceived and managed. Friend or Foe of the current administration, I think everyone would agree on that, if nothing else.

AAMAS has also had some changes. The Listserv is FINALLY up and running. We hit some glitches at first, but I think we're well on our way. Anne will tell you more about it.

CCMA reached out to us. Theresa Crothers and I attended a meeting with members of their council to discuss stronger ties. As a result of that meeting, and as a part of a future plan for our organization, Theresa and Amy Armstrong will be meeting with me separately at the end of the month to develop steps to take to the entire board, and then to you, our membership.

Conference registration materials are now available, though was not without some issues, going through multiple tests and revisions to make sure it worked. Even with those efforts, we did not get it 100% perfect.

Our website is up and running almost 100% of the time, which is one of the measures of successful websites, isn't perfect either. During several board calls we've identified information that is either old or no longer applicable. The registration page didn't work; conference information displayed with last years' conference information for some, and payment was difficult for others. This is an area we will be looking at in specific detail at our face-to-face meeting in Chicago just prior to our conference.

Our Nomination's Chair has been struggling to find candidates for office of President Elect. The future of AAMAS will not be long if there's no one in the leadership role. Just as a multitude of people in our country are involving themselves in letting the government know what the masses think, let our members tell us and get involved with our organization. We need volunteers to step into roles to fill vacancies of leadership. You don't work alone. I have found all the current members of the board to be willing to help me when I ask. Believe me, I do ask!

The Republicans are working on repealing the Affordable Care Act, and this could have a significant impact on our roles as auditors. Providers are very nervous about this repeal, with the loss of their revenue being on top of the list. People have strong views on this, but because of where we usually sit, between Providers and Payers, I think our perspective is unique and seldom heard. We can see sides, the pluses and minuses. As a private citizen, not as my role of President of AAMAS or as the title my job affords me, I've written to my representatives many times giving them my opinion, along with facts, telling them what they need to do. I anticipate that this will be a topic of discussion at conference this year.

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## From Your President *(continued)*

In my last article, I told you about the many Christmas trees I decorate and put up each year. Well, the trees are down, and we've started a new project of putting wainscoting up in my family room and painting rooms. Any home improvement project always leads to another. All of this has a deadline. One of my sons and his family are coming for a visit. There's a deadline! Here's another factoid for you. It's also tax time, something I absolutely dread and drag my feet over. I know it has to be done, and my accountant is patiently waiting. I know we pay for the privilege of living here with our taxes, but when the deadline falls on my birthday, it seems doubly painful.

Our conference is just around the corner. I look forward to attending, participating and networking there. I hope to see you there.

*David Eklof*  
AAMAS President

## A Message From Your Vice President

AAMAS is happy to announce the Listserv is now live. The Listserv is a place for members to post questions related to auditing and get answers from peers. It is also a great tool to use to share changes and new information in the auditing world. We encourage all members to take part in the Listserv. Please sign up under the members-only section on the AAMAS site. The Listserv is a moderated service. This will help to eliminate spam and unrelated posts. I would like to thank Cindy Gillespie for volunteering to be a moderator for the Listserv. We are very excited to once again be able to provide this tool to our members. If there are any questions on the Listserv, please feel free to contact us.

Please remember to get your nominations in for the President-Elect and the nominating committee. In order to survive, AAMAS needs its members to be active and involved. We encourage all of our members to be active in committees or to become board members. It is a great learning opportunity and a lot of fun to serve on the board or to be part of a committee.

I can't wait for this year's conference in Chicago. Theresa has done an amazing job arranging speakers. I hope to see everyone there. Safe travels to all, and I will see you in the Windy City!

*Anne Haider*  
AAMAS Vice President

## Secretary/Treasurer Notes

### What Was I Thinking?!

After years of saying, "I'll look into it. That's a good idea and would really help my job...it can't be that hard," I took the plunge and signed up for a coding class to get my CPC certificate. I really couldn't say no. One was being offered after work on Monday nights in my office building. How hard could it be to stay late every Monday after work and learn to code?

My first class was a real eye opener! I have not been in school for over 30 years. I had forgotten the fine art of taking notes and studying. My first test I got a 70%. Was my brain that old?

Being a nurse and auditing for over 20 years, I thought I would ace the class. It certainly knocked me off my high horse. Coding is a whole new world. Talk about details and rules. There are pages and pages of them in the CPT and ICD-10 books. Why had I never read these before? They are full of great information which I should have known about years ago. If you have never read them, I would encourage everyone to read the coding guidelines in the front of the ICD-10 book and CPT book.

I now take the following quote to heart: "True humility is staying teachable, regardless of how much you already know." Although I have no plans on changing jobs and the coding degree is not required, I am very glad I am taking the class. I am challenging myself. I might not feel this way come June when it is time to take the CPC test. Luckily it is in the morning, and I have learned that is a much better time for my "mature" brain.

Our annual conference is approaching. It is full of interesting topics and knowledgeable speakers. I encourage everyone to come and challenge yourselves to learn something new.

*Amy Armstrong*  
AAMAS Secretary/Treasurer

## Education Committee Report

I want to thank everyone who participated in the survey we posted late last year. I had a chance to break down the results, which will help us better meet the needs of the membership. We sent the survey to 517 members and nonmembers, and received 118 responses (99 members, 19 nonmembers). Our current membership is 266 members.

The survey shows that, as an association, we have become more provider-based. Historically, we have had about an equal number of payer-based and provider-based auditors. We now have 60% provider-based auditors and 22% payer-based auditors. Third-party audit companies represent 12% of total membership. The third-party auditors could be either provider or payer-based, and this was not delineated. Also, a small percentage of auditors are auditing physician bills. Health systems represent 63%, insurance companies represent 11% and third-party audit companies represent 14%.

Of the nonmembers who responded, 64% stated that their needs were not being met due to financial reasons, or their membership was no longer applicable to their job. The financial reasons cited were: too many associations competing for their professional dollars and a lack of reimbursement for membership. Of the total members, 20% have retired.

The majority of us are still doing some form of Hospital Bill Auditing (58%). The other areas of focus are Compliance (32%), Quality Improvement (18%), DRG Management and Denial (12%), Risk Management (10%), Case Management (9%), and RAC (7%).

**One of the overriding issues that kept arising is the number of competing professional organizations and certifications available to our members. Another issue is the average age of our membership. 68% of our members are 55-65 years old and 21% are 45-54 years old.**

So, where do we go from here? As an association, we are facing many challenges. Declining membership due to changes in the audit landscape, competition for our professional dollars with multiple organizations offering certifications, and the average age of our membership are all factors that have impacted our membership.

We have empaneled a subcommittee to address these issues and identify strategies for moving forward. We are open to any and all suggestions.

Please feel free to contact me with questions, concerns, or suggestions.

*Theresa Crothers*  
Education Committee Chair

## Upcoming Conference

Conference registration is in full swing! I am very excited about the speakers we have lined up. Both the preconference workshops, and the general conference sessions offer information on topics that are relevant and important to our profession. If you have not already registered, log on to the conference registration link at [www.aamas.org](http://www.aamas.org). You will find the entire agenda, course descriptions, speaker information, and the registration forms. Also, for 2 weeks prior and 2 weeks post conference, the speakers' PowerPoint presentations will be posted under the members-only section of the web site. To continue our custom for the last few years, hard copies will not be handed out. RN CEU's, CMAS CEU's, and AAPC CEU's are being applied for.

The Embassy Suites Rosemont is a lovely facility, and is close to the Chicago O'Hare airport. It is close to Rivers Casino, and we will be arranging shuttle service for Thursday evening for those who are interested. Also within walking distance are restaurants, Kings Bowl for bowling and food, and shopping.

I look forward to seeing you in Chicago!

*Theresa Crothers*  
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[crothers@charter.net](mailto:crothers@charter.net)

## Nominating Committee

### Nomination's Chair's Message

Another Monitor has rolled around, and I find myself without the news of a slate of candidates to offer to you. Each monthly board meeting is filled with news of progress on many fronts for the organization. Most exciting is the planning of the conference in Chicago. As our education chair brings together a wide range of great topics and speakers, I wonder if we will be planning more conferences in the future. When it is my turn, I have the only negative report of the meeting. My committee's efforts to find candidates have fallen on deaf ears. You can tell by the president's message that this board has found new momentum. The Listserv and the conference plans are all building blocks of a bright future for AAMAS. However, without members volunteering to fill our vacant positions, the organization can't go forward. Many willing hands spread the tasks, and no one person's job is overwhelming.

Please join us. We are looking for YOU!!! Don't think someone else will do it. They have not.

**POSITIONS AVAILABLE:** President-Elect

Nomination Committee – 3 members

All of us on the Nominations Committee are looking forward to hearing from YOU!

<i>Joan Alexander</i>	<i>Arlene Liljeberg</i>	<i>Sue Zietlow</i>
619-593-0539	713-553-7166	701-720-5669

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*David Eklof, President*  
*Allen Shane, Past President*  
*Anne Haider, Vice President*  
*Amy Armstrong, Secretary/Treasurer*

*Theresa Crothers, Education Committee Chair*  
*Joan Alexander, Nomination's Committee Chair*  
*Mike McManus, Executive Director*

## Meet the AAMAS HQ Staff!



**AAMAS New  
Executive Director**

**Mike McManus**

*ext. 119*

## Additional AAMAS HQ Staff



**Liz Kutz  
Chief Financial  
Officer at Association  
Executives Group**

*ext. 102*

### **Vice President of Operations at Association Executives Group**

Mike attended Seton Hall University, where he majored in marketing and was a member of the varsity golf and basketball teams. Mike has held a variety of management positions throughout his career, including a Director position with Tiffany & Co. and as general manager with the world's largest Minuteman Press organization. He also has more than 10 years of nonprofit Board and event management experience. He has held the position of Executive Director for eight associations during his career.



**Roy Smith  
Vice President of  
IT at Association  
Executives Group**



**Nicole Cheever  
AAMAS Customer  
Care & Membership  
Manager**

*ext. 116*



**Margie Zizis  
Senior Accountant**

*ext. 105*

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