



Patient Access—CHAA

The person who earns a Certified Healthcare Access Associate certificate (CHAA) can become a patient access specialist. Patient access specialists are often the first point of contact for medical service to patients. The focus of the successful specialist is on excellent customer service providing a positive experience.

Patient access specialists handle pre-registration and clinical prerequisites, financial clearance and verification of benefits, and payer authorization. This specialist takes patient insurance information and ensures receipt of HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) compliance forms. The patient access specialist works closely with the patient, from initial contact to departure, and follows up.

The patient access specialist must possess strong communication and telephone skills, an understanding of medical terminology and anatomy, as well as a comprehension of the importance of the revenue cycle and medical insurance options available to patients.

Patient access specialists have knowledge of patients' personal information and must maintain confidentiality at all times. A basic understanding of information from the patient and medical insurance company guarantees prompt administration of medical treatment to the patient and quick financial reimbursement for the medical facility.

Most patient access specialists work in physicians' offices or other healthcare facilities in full time positions. If the workplace is open evening and weekends, the patient access specialist will need to work at these times.

Indiana Wage Information

	Entry	Median
Hourly Wage	\$10.40	\$13.00

Job Outlook in Indiana

Long term	27.1 % (increase)
Short Term	2.2 % (increase)

*Data collected from hoosierdata.in.gov

Job Duties

- Schedule patient appointments
- Take patient history and measure vital signs
- Help the physician with patient examinations
- Assist with medical emergencies
- Collect specimens for testing
- Manage medical records
- Process billing and collecting
- Provide referral and transfer services
- Maintain knowledge of community services and resources available to patient
- Interview patients or their representatives to identify problems relating to care

Important Qualities

Analytical skills – must be able to understand and follow medical charts and diagnoses; may be required to code a patient’s medical records

Detail oriented – must be precise when taking vital signs or recording patient information

Interpersonal skills – must be able to discuss patient information with other medical personnel, such as a physician; often interact with patients who may be in pain or distress and must respond in a calm and professional manner

Technical skills must be able to use basic clinical instruments to take patient vital signs

Skills and Knowledge

Technical

- Use of electronic health records software
- Use of medical equipment for vital signs



English Language Arts

- Strong verbal and written language skills
- Medical terminology
- Telephone techniques
- Records management

Math

- Basics of insurance and medical coding
- Medical accounting, financial statements
- Cost analysis and budgets for medical practice

Certification and Advancement

In most states, including Indiana, there are no formal educational requirements for becoming a patient access specialist. Those employed as patient access specialists usually have a high school diploma or equivalent. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, high school students interested in a career as a patient access specialist should take courses in biology, chemistry, and anatomy.

The National Association of Healthcare Access Management (NAHAM) requires the following before a student can sit for the CHAA examination: Either one year of practical work experience in healthcare or finance or successful completion of an accredited program in healthcare; either a high school diploma or equivalent as well as thirty-plus professional development contact hours earned within the past two years, or an associates/bachelors degree from an accredited institution in healthcare, business or related field; and the signature of one supervisor or course instructor.

Although patient access certification is not required in the state of Indiana, employers prefer to hire certified assistants. Courses in this field may take between four (4) and fourteen (14) weeks to complete. In larger practices or facilities, patient access specialists can specialize in clinical or administrative work. Patient access specialists, with continuing education, can become health information medical technicians or medical coders.

How can YOU get involved?

The world of work relies on the foundational skills students acquire in your classrooms and/or programs!

- Know your students’/clients’ interests and career goals
- Affirm the value of the skills/hobbies students demonstrate both in and outside of the classroom
- Infuse your classroom culture and/or meetings with career-minded activities
- Provide time to make connections between the material learned in adult education or workshops and students’ daily lives/career aspirations
- Know the basic job descriptions and training requirements of in-demand occupations in your area
- Know which WorkINdiana programs are available in your region
- Know the processes for referring students to postsecondary or on-the-job training
- Post resources where students can find more information about further education/training and careers