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RHDS
Recertification
HANDBOOK

Understanding Recertification for the Registered Healthcare Documentation Specialist

Clinicians rely on the keen eyes, ears, and interpretive mind of the healthcare documentation workforce to ensure that health data is captured and recorded accurately. Certification ensures that an individual has met the minimum requirements and standards of practice through benchmark testing and has a foundational understanding of the diagnostic process, clinical medicine, treatment, and care to be interpreted accurately and applied within the context of complex narrative. Recertification by participating in continuing education activities maintains and builds on your competency in the field of healthcare documentation.

Recertification Cycle

Upon initial certification, RHDSs are placed in a 3-year continuing education (CE) cycle based on the anniversary month of their exam, expiring the last day of the month. (Example: A healthcare documentation specialist successfully passing the RHDS exam in September 2019 will need to recertify by September 30, 2022.)

RHDSs maintain their credential and build on their competency through participation in continuing education activities relevant to medical transcription and healthcare documentation. Recertification is required every 3 years. This is necessary for the practitioner to function effectively in today's fast-paced healthcare environment.

All RHDSs are responsible for knowing when their cycle ends. This information is sent at the time of initial certification and recertification and can be found on the RHDS Certificate or Validation of Recertification. You can also find your credential expiration date within your AHDI record.

Membership in AHDI is not a requirement to hold the RHDS credential; however, it is encouraged because of the opportunities and benefits afforded members.

Policy Update

In March 2020, the Credentialing Commission for Healthcare Documentation (CCHD) implemented a new policy to allow RHDSs to recredential by earning CECs in lieu of taking a recredentialing course. Between May 1, 2020, and December 31, 2021, RHDSs have the choice to renew their credential either by taking the RHDS Recredentialing Course *or* by earning continuing education credits (CECs).

Beginning January 1, 2022, _all_ RHDS credential-holders will be required to recredential by earning 20 CECs per 3-year cycle.

Please note, the terms "recredential/recredentialing" and "recertify/recertification" are used interchangeably but have the same meaning – to renew or validate one's credential.

Recertification at-a-Glance

Complete and submit the following items to AHDI up to 3 months prior to but no later than the expiration date of your credential.

- ☐ Complete and pass the **RHDS Recredentialing Course (option available only through December 31, 2021)**.
  -OR-
- ☐ Accrue at least 20 CECs, including 18 CECs in the Core Areas and remaining 2 CECs from Core Areas and/or Optional Areas. CEC categories and examples are listed on the **RHDS CEC Requirements Table (only option for all RHDSs beginning January 1, 2022)**.
- ☐ Complete the **RHDS CE Summary Form (.docx)** or **RHDS CE Summary Form (.pdf)**.
- ☐ Sign the Recertification Agreement.
- ☐ Pay the recertification fee.

NOTE: AHDI performs random auditing of credentialed individuals. Proof of attendance forms, summaries, and quizzes should be submitted at the end of cycle only in the event of notification of audit, along with the CE Summary form, fees, and Recertification Statement and Agreement.

Recertification by RHDS Recredentialing Course

Option available only May 1, 2020, through December 31, 2021. RHDSs choosing this option must complete the **RHDS Recredentialing Course** and pass the final exam up to 3 months prior to but no later than the expiration date of their credential.

AHDI offers the RHDS Recredentialing Course through our online training system. The intent of this course is for RHDSs who have already earned the entry-level RHDS credential in order to ensure that their core knowledge remains current. The course includes 12 chapters, each with a concluding quiz. To pass the course and renew the RHDS credential, participants must complete all 12 chapters and quizzes with a score of 75% or higher on each section quiz and receive a minimum of 75% on the final exam. The program is available to you 24 hours a day 7 days a week for 30 days. Participants who successfully complete the course will renew their RHDS credential for a 3-year period.

The RHDS Recredentialing Course will assess the candidate's understanding of the sections addressed in *__The Book of Style for Medical Transcription, 3rd edition__*, deemed to be level 1 concepts necessary for job readiness.

For complete details, including course blueprint objectives, overview, outline, schedule, cost, and registration information, visit the RHDS Recredentialing Course web page.

Recertification by Earning Continuing Education Credits

Beginning January 1, 2022, the RHDS Recredentialing Course will be discontinued and all RHDSs will be required to recertify by earning continuing education credits (CECs).

► Continuing Education Category Requirements

A minimum of 20 CECs must be accrued with at least 18 of these in the core areas of Clinical Medicine (6), Technology and Tools (6), Professional Development (4), and Medicolegal Issues (2). The remaining 2 required CECs may be obtained in either the core areas mentioned above or the optional area of Complementary Medicine. It is recommended that RHDSs obtain more than the minimum 20 CECs, in the event a question arises as to the creditworthiness of an activity.

Categories	Required Credits
REQUIRED CORE AREAS	
Clinical Medicine (CM)	6
Technology & Tools (TT)	6
Medicolegal (ML)	2
Professional Development (PD)	4
OPTIONAL AREAS	

Optional/Additional
   - Complementary Medicine (CoM)
   - Any core areas
	2

Total	**20**

► Continuing Education Activities

CECs may be earned by participating in creditworthy activities relevant to medical transcription and healthcare documentation. An activity is defined as a single presentation, lecture, educational course, workshop on a single topic, approved quiz, or article summary. Calculation of CECs for live and recorded activities such as lectures, webinars, workshops, and symposia is based on clock hours. One (1) CEC is given for every 60 minutes of attendance or participation. No credit is given for activities less than 30 minutes in length. All activities are evaluated individually for creditworthiness, e.g., when several educational activities are part of a larger program, each activity is evaluated individually for creditworthiness and number of credits that may be approved. All activities must meet the requirement of providing intermediate to advanced (level 2) content of an appropriate scope and nature for a recredentialing RHDS.

NOTE: To be creditworthy, continuing education activities such as webinars, in-person presentations, and videos must be formally presented by qualified professionals on creditworthy topics relevant to medical transcription/healthcare documentation and directed to professional audiences. Articles, presentations, and workshops directed to lay audiences or the general public are generally not creditworthy. Live presentations must be given by someone with expert knowledge of the subject sufficient enough to respond to questions.

The maximum number of CECs allowed for any single continuing education activity is 10. For clarification, a single source or activity is defined as any course or book providing professional development in a single content area. For more detail on what activities are classified as single source, download the **AHDI Recredentialing Resource Guide**. It is a goal of AHDI's recredentialing program to ensure that RHDSs are

engaging in diverse, well-rounded continuing education and not earning all 20 CECs from a single activity, course, or product.

RHDSs may earn CECs for their participation in the following activities relevant to the scope of practice for recredentialing RHDSs in medical transcription/healthcare documentation. The number of CECs and category type for completing AHDI modules, courses, videos, audio files of creditworthy speakers at AHDI conferences, online webinars, quizzes, and activities are indicated in the online product description or physical product (eg, CD, printed book or magazine. RHDSs should retain proof of activity completion or proof of attendance documentation in case of audit. *See also "Written Summaries" on next page.

CREDIT-WORTHY ACTIVITY	VERIFYALBE DOCUMENTATION	NUMBER OF CECS, CATEGORY
Live (online or in-person) or recorded presentations (eg, lectures, webinars, seminars, workshops, symposia, conference	Proof of attendance certificate or email; 300-word summary*	1 CEC per 60 minutes of participation, activities as marked
articles, book chapter	300-word summary*; online quiz results screenshot showing passing score of 85% or higher	Pre-determined by AHDI as marked
AHDI modules and courses	Email showing passing grade and/or certificate of successful completion	Pre-determined by AHDI as marked
College-credit course (or college-credit equivalent) or independent study relevant to medical transcription/healthcare documentation (See "College Courses/Independent Study" on next page for more details)	Proof of approved CE Approval Request form	Determined by AHDI and noted on approval request form (sent via email); maximum of 10 CECs if contact hours meet or exceed 10 hours of activity
Puzzles, trivia	Proof of attendance or participation certificate; completed and self-graded results showing passing score of 85% or higher; proof of approved CE Approval Request form	As assigned or as noted on approved form (emailed), typically 0.5 to 1 CEC
Author of article, textbook, workbook, or manual	Proof of approved CE Approval Request form.	Will be noted on approved form (emailed)
Speaker presentation (eg, webinar, seminar) **Note: Credit is awarded one time only during a 3-year cycle to speakers making multiple presentations of the same creditworthy program.**	CE Verification form; proof of approved CE Approval Request form	Will be noted on approved form (emailed) generally, 1 CEC for preparation and 1 CEC for presentation; may vary based on length and scope of content
Instructor presentation of instructional material (i.e., teaching a class) **Note: credit is awarded one time only during a 3-year cycle**		varies based on length and scope of content.

► College Courses/Independent Study

Requests for approval of college courses and independent study programs must include (1) a fully completed CEC Approval Request form, and (2) a copy of the catalog description, course curriculum, or other information detailing creditworthiness (list of textbooks, web link, etc.). These should be submitted prior to or within 30 days following course completion. Proof of completion with a final grade of C or higher must be submitted at the end of cycle, regardless of audit.

NOTE: A class/course at the college level does not automatically qualify it for CECs. Content must meet appropriate requirements in order to be creditworthy. See the RHDS CEC Requirements Table and the AHDI Recredentialing Resource Guide for more information.

► Written Summaries

Activities requiring written summaries must be completed during the current 3-year CE cycle; that is, creditworthy material must have been read, viewed, or heard during the CE cycle, although it may have been published previously. The information must still be current and relevant. See the AHDI Recredentialing Resource Guide for further details regarding timeline eligibility guidelines of published works. Summaries should be submitted and contain the following information:

- Source of the article or location/sponsor of the program
- Name and qualifications or credentials of author or presenter
- Date of activity
- Page number(s) and volume or publication date of online or printed resources (e.g., magazines, books)
- Website address and date accessed (if using an online resource).

A 300-word summary in your own words should be written in outline or narrative form so that it conveys the essence of the article or presentation. Summaries must be typed or legibly printed and suitable for photocopying. AHDI will not process illegible summaries.

Summaries are to be submitted along with the CE Summary Form at the end of the recertification cycle in the event of an audit.

When available, the results for a graded and scored test or quiz may be submitted in lieu of a summary. This is to be submitted with the CE Summary form at the time of recertification in the event of an audit.

► Outside Sources

AHDI will automatically accept approved continuing medical education (CME) credits from outside sources when submitted at the time of recertification and accompanied by documentation of CME approval. RHDSs should request separate approval by AHDI for CME programs directed to physicians and other healthcare providers. A list of preapproved activities is listed on the **Activity Provider List**.

Approval and Tracking of Continuing Education Activities

► Proof of Attendance/Proof of Completion

Proof of attendance or proof of activity completion must be retained by the RHDS until notice of recertification has been received. Such items should be sent to AHDI only if requested or in the case of an audit. Proof-of-attendance documents should contain the following:

- Name of sponsoring organization
- Date(s) and time(s) of activities
- Title of each presentation, activity, or course
- Name of each speaker, facilitator, or instructor

A CEC Approval Request form signed by a representative of a non-AHDI activity (e.g., tumor board, grand rounds) may serve as proof of attendance.

For live (online or in-person) CEC activities or those completed in a group setting, obtain and retain the proof of attendance certificate provided.

For recorded or independent study CEC activities (e.g, watching/listening to a recorded webinar or reading a relevant article from an outside source), or for activities in which a proof of attendance certificate is not provided, a 300-word summary is required as proof of completion.

► Filling Out CE Summary Forms

Forms must be completed as directed; those filled out incorrectly or incompletely will be returned for correction or completion. Additional summary forms are available online or by request, and blank forms may be photocopied. Other computer-generated forms may be submitted as long as all information requested on the CE Summary form is provided.

NOTE: If a CE Summary form is submitted more than 3 months before the end of a cycle, you will be notified by phone or email to resubmit the summary form and supporting documentation for recertification at the appropriate time.

Carefully follow the directions below for submitting CE Summary forms at the end of each 3-year cycle.

- Type or carefully print all information.
- Fill in name and address. Indicate any recent changes.
- Fill in CMT/CHDS number and date submitted.
- Check appropriate CE cycle dates.
- Provide contact information (phone, fax, email).
- List only one activity per line.
- Include for every activity: title, sponsor or source, month/day/year of activity, number and category of CECs approved for that activity.
- In the event you are randomly audited, include copies of all activities (such as article summaries, quizzes, and proof of attendance documents) with the Continuing Education Summary form and other required recertification materials and fees to demonstrate completion of the activity.

List each educational session or speaker separately when part of a symposium or meeting with multiple sessions. EXCEPTION: For events consisting of multiple sessions, you may attach a copy of the proof of attendance or meeting program and enter the event title, sponsor, date(s), and total number of CECs by category if and only if ALL the following information appears on the documentation:

- Name of program/event
- Program sponsor
- Date(s)
- Title of each presentation
- Category and number of CECs for each approved presentation
- Do not write in the section labeled "For Certification Use Only."
- Send your completed CE Summary Form (and any copies of proofs of attendance or programs, if requested for audit purposes) to AHDI. Keep a copy for your records until you receive notice of recertification.

► Individual Continuing Education Activity Requests

Individual RHDSs must request credit approval from AHDI for any CE activities that have not been preapproved by AHDI. These requests must be made at the time they are earned, *not* at the end of cycle. All CECs submitted at the end of their cycle must already have been approved. In the event of audit, quizzes, narrative summaries of prior-approved articles, and article summaries from other educational industry-related sources must be submitted along with the CE Summary form at the end of the recertification cycle in order to demonstrate completion.

► Filling Out CEC Approval Request Forms

To facilitate processing approval requests, submit one form for each activity, even when there are several activities on the same day or within the same symposium, seminar, or convention. Fill out the form completely. Attach supporting documentation if information will not fit in the space provided and/or further clarifies the request. (Send copies only or make copies for your records; AHDI will retain documentation for our files and will not return copies to you.) All forms must be submitted electronically using the **RHDS CEC Approval Request form**. Submit only 5 requests per email or your email may be filtered as spam by our servers. Make sure to include all required information, as described below.

- Name and address of the person to whom the response to the request should be returned.
- Name of the sponsoring chapter, organization, institution, or article source.
- Complete name of the presentation, article, or activity.
- Description of the activity content and list 3 to 5 learning objectives for each activity.
- Speaker's (or author's) name and credential or title.
- Speaker's (or author's) qualifications to address the topic.
- Date(s) of activity.
- Length of time of the activity in hours and/or minutes or beginning and ending times (do not include breaks or meals).
- Number of CECs requested. Mark the appropriate category as you understand it using the **RHDS CEC Requirements Table**.

Send your request to AHDI and keep a copy for your records. The approved form will be emailed to the person requesting approval within 3 business days.

It is the responsibility of the RHDS to complete the form in full and to provide enough supporting evidence to show that the activity meets criteria to be deemed credit worthy. If information submitted is insufficient to determine creditworthiness, you will be notified to provide additional details so that processing can be completed. If approval of a request is denied, a reason will be given. RHDSs may request clarification about a denied request form or contest the decision by contacting certification staff.

► Submitting CEC Approval Request Forms

All RHDS CEC Approval Request forms must be submitted electronically.

RHDS CEC Approval Request eForm

Forms submitted via postal mail or fax will <u>not be reviewed</u>. <u>Do not submit hand-written forms that have been scanned</u>, as scanned forms prohibit AHDI from completing the approval section at the bottom of the page and returning it to you with signature and approval decision. Approval requests are not considered finalized until and unless they have been signed off by certification staff at AHDI.

Submission Process

► Accruing and Reporting Credits

Each 3-year CE cycle begins on the date specified in the letter of notification of certification. No CECs are awarded for initial certification.

RHDSs must record AHDI-approved CE activities on the CE Summary form to submit at the end of each 3-year cycle. (See "Filling Out CE Summary form" on pages 9-10.)

All forms and fees must be received in the Modesto office by the recertification deadline. All activities reported must have been completed within the current 3-year cycle. CECs earned in excess of the minimum 20 required cannot be carried over to the next cycle.

► Review, Audit, Denial

AHDI may audit an RHDS's reported CE activities at its sole discretion, request additional information at any time, or deny credit based on information provided.

AHDI randomly identifies approximately 20% of the summary forms in each cycle for audit. When audited, an RHDS must submit their proof of attendance, quiz completion results, and/or 300-word summary for *each* activity listed on their CE Summary form. Certification will expire for RHDSs who do not provide the required documentation prior to the expiration date of their credential.

► Early Submissions

Recredentialing materials/fees may be submitted up to 3 months in advance of your recertification expiration date. You will not be able to earn CECs toward your next cycle until after the paperwork for your current cycle is processed and approved. For clarification or further information, please contact us at credentialing@ahdionline.org.

► Recertification Fees

The recertification fee is $75 every 3 years for AHDI members and $105 every 3 years for non-AHDI members. This fee sustains record-keeping and notification systems over the next 3-year CE cycle. The fee is required, nonrefundable, and nontransferable. Statements for Recertification Fees are generated by the certification program and are separate from AHDI membership dues notices.

Payment must accompany recertification forms and must be received in the Modesto office by the recertification deadline.

Upon recertification, the RHDS will receive an acknowledgement notice and new certificate noting the new cycle expiration date. Recertification is valid for 3 years.

► Extensions

An extension time of 60 days may be granted to allow RHDSs additional time to accrue CECs. Extension requests must be submitted in writing and accompanied by a $50 extension fee prior to the original recertification deadline. Final recertification documentation, the $50 extension fee, plus the normal recertification fee (noted under *Recertification Fees* above) must be submitted within the 60-day extension period. Awarding of a 60-day extension will result in a permanent change of your recertification deadline. For example: a recertification deadline of 3/31/2020 may be extended to 5/31/2020. The new recertification deadline from this point on will be 5/31 every 3 years. Extension requests and questions may be directed to the Credentialing Department by calling (toll free) 800-982-2182 ext. 102 or (direct) 209-527-9620 ext. 102.

► Lapsed Notices and Grace Period

A lapsed notice will be sent to any RHDS who does not submit the proper documentation and fees prior to their recertification deadline (or extension date). RHDSs have 90 days from the original expiration date to submit their documentation and fees in order for their credential to be reinstated. There is a $50 reinstatement fee, in addition to the original recertification fee amount, due at the time of reinstatement. Individuals whose certification has expired are no longer eligible to identify themselves as an RHDS. Individuals who do not recertify during the 90-day grace period must successfully pass the RHDS exam to become certified again.

► Credentialing Status

The credentialing status of an individual is public information, and certification staff will respond to oral or written requests for verification. Certification status (presently certified, never certified, certification lapsed, or certification revoked), certification date, the cycle ending date, and reason no longer certified (if certification has lapsed or been revoked) may be released.

► Change of Name or Address

In order to protect the individual RHDS, notification of a name change must be made in writing and sent to the Credentialing Department at AHDI via email, fax, or mail. A printed copy of the notice is filed with the RHDS's records for documentation. Notice of address changes may be made orally or in writing or by updating your AHDI online profile.

► Failure to Recertify

All RHDSs are responsible for tracking their own CECs approved during their 3-year cycle and knowing their recertification cycle end date. RHDSs should notify AHDI promptly if reminders, fee statements, or recertification materials have not been received as expected. It is the RHDS's responsibility to notify AHDI of any changes in address, name, or contact information (also see "Change of Name or Address" section below). RHDSs who do not submit the proper forms and fees to the Modesto office by their deadline will be considered lapsed and will no longer be eligible to identify themselves as an RHDS. Individuals will be given a 90-day period in which to reinstate their credential. If the individual does not recertify during the reinstatement period, the only way to become credentialed again is by successfully passing the RHDS exam.

Recertification Submission Checklist

Before submitting paperwork, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I have a minimum total of 20 approved credits in the required distribution (at least 18 in the core categories)?
- Have I provided all information requested on the form?
- Have I attached all supporting documents required if audited (e.g., proof of attendance, proof of activity completion, quiz results, article summaries)?
- Have I signed and dated my recertification agreement and paid all fees?
- Am I meeting the deadline?

If you can answer "yes" to all of the above, congratulate yourself for doing your part. Validation of recertification will be sent to you as soon as processing is completed.