Health Information Management and Systems Society (HIMSS)
National Capital Area Chapter (NCA)

White Paper on

**Navigating HIMSS Advancement—a Methodical Approach—
for Military and Federal Employees
HIMSS Advancement-Differentiate and Brand Yourself
A How-to Guide to Simplify the Process**

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Intent:
- Obtaining HIMSS certification and advancement is very challenging and rewarding. The information shared within this paper provides a quick overview of information and proven methods **on earning HIMSS certifications** such as the *Certified Associate in Health Information and Management Systems* (CAHIMS), *Certified Professional Health Information Systems* (CPHIMS); and **advancing** to *Senior* (SHIMSS), *Fellow* (FHIMSS), or *Life* (LHIMSS) member status in HIMSS.

- Content has been compiled from various HIMSS resources, including the Candidate Handbook, HIMSS Website, and The Learning Plan, which HIMSS has thoroughly vetted.

- Certified CAHIMS, CPHIMS, SHIMSS, FHIMSS, and LHIMSS members have provided recommendations, pointers, and study methods. These are the private view and opinions of these authors and members, and NOT HIMSS organization.

Why Achieve Certification and Advancement?
- Achieving advancement in HIMSS is a **crucial milestone** in demonstrating a broad body of healthcare knowledge, management, leadership, and contributions to HIMSS.

- Earning certification of CAHIMS and CPHIMS is a **significant stepping-stone** in career development, success and demonstrates dedication in being a catalyst in healthcare transformation.

- Advancement to Senior, Fellow, or Life Member status **confirms your professional knowledge** and a continued growth mindset. HIMSS members can advance to Senior, Fellow, or Life member status without having earned CAHIMS or CPHIMS.

Overall Considerations:
- First, please consider the reasons **you are pursuing certification** or advancement? Are you genuinely passionate and interested in growing knowledge and skills to strengthen your leadership abilities and contribution to society?

- Secondly, **know all the requirements**, factors, and the what-ifs in earning and maintaining the certification or advancement and learning if your organization accepts CAHIMS or CPHIMS as a recognized board certification.

- Thirdly, **methodically map out a pathway to achieve certification or advancement**. As for CAHIMS and CPHIMS, this includes knowing the requirements, resources, creating a study plan, earning Continuing Education (CE), and the three-year renewal cycle process. Advancing to Senior or Fellow status requires knowing and understanding the specific rigors to earn points for advancement and the application process. Build your network of colleagues that will support your goals and can offer their lessons learned.

- Finally, **consider developing a contingency plan**. Unexpected situations like budget cuts, changes in your organization's conference attendance policy, life events such as family emergencies, military deployments, illness, job changes, and most recently, COVID-19 have occurred, introducing temporary roadblocks to success for some. In the past ten years, this has happened during sequestration and COVID.

Overview of HIMSS Certifications:
- **CAHIMS** is an entry-level certification that allows candidates **to demonstrate** professional knowledge in healthcare information and management systems to potential and current employers.

- **CPHIMS** is a board certification program **for experienced professionals**, acknowledging and honoring their proven expertise and commitment to the field.

- Specifics are found at https://www.himss.org/resources-certification/overview.

Overview of HIMSS Advancement Opportunities:
- **Senior Members (SHIMSS)** and **Fellow Members (FHIMSS)** are recognized for their dedication to HIMSS and the healthcare industry who achieved milestones for direct participation and contributions to the HIMSS.

- **Life Members (LHIMSS)** are considered the most elite members of HIMSS. Life members have at least thirty years of service and the desire to advance to Life Member Status.

- **Specific information on advancement** for Senior, Fellow, and Life Members Status are located at https://www.himss.org/membership-participation-member-advancement.

CAHIMS – Earning and Maintaining

Factors in Earning CAHIMS:
- Listed below are recommended resources, techniques, and methods that have been used to pass the CAHIMS exam.

- Start by reviewing the **CAHIMS Candidate Handbook**. This handbook contains an overview of the exam and the exam application, including materials required to prepare for the exam. The handbook is located under the Latest Resources under the Resource Center or at this link https://www.himss.org/resources-certification/cahims-candidate-handbook.

  o Review and familiarize yourself with the **CAHIMS Examination Content Outline** to review content categories and associated tasks. This exam content was defined by an international or national role delineation study and tests on tasks performed routinely and considered essential to the practice.

- Review the **Competency Gap Assessment** to identify areas that may require additional study. Once you have determined the areas you need to focus your review on, you can develop your **Learning Plan**.

- **Your Learning Plan** will require commitment and focus. HIMSS has also developed a **Learning Plan** to assist you in your studies: www.himss.org/resources-certification/cahims-learning-plan.

- Using multiple **Study Resources** can lead to a clearer understanding of the topic. However, HIMSS resources do not "teach to the test." Listed below are HIMSS provided resources:
    - **HIMSS Dictionary of Healthcare Information Technology Terms, Acronyms, and Organizations, Fifth Edition**, serves as a quick reference for students to navigate the ever-changing field of Health IT. You can order your copy directly from the HIMSS Store.

    - **The CAHIMS Review Guide** is the ideal resource to prepare for the CAHIMS Certification as it contains content reflected in the CAHIMS exam content outline. Practice exam questions at the end of the book reinforce key concepts explored throughout the book and general knowledge obtainment.

    - **Participation in a Review Course** can also support you in preparing for the exam. You can contact the certification team at certification@himss.org for more information and the schedule of upcoming courses.

    - **Taking the Practice Test via the HIMSS Marketplace** in an environment that mimics the Pearson VUE environment can significantly assist in familiarizing oneself with the exam format.

- **To qualify** to sit for the CAHIMS Exam and earn the certification, you must first meet these eligibility requirements:
    - Have a high school diploma or its equivalent.

- After reviewing and fulfilling the CAHIMS eligibility requirements, you **may apply** for the CAHIMS Examination on the HIMSS website.
    - HIMSS will review your application upon submission. Once approved, you will receive an Authorization to Test (ATT) email. You cannot make a testing appointment until the ATT email has been received.

    - You **may reschedule** your exam thirty days or more before your scheduled date. If rescheduling 5-29 days before the exam date, you will incur a $35 cancellation/rescheduling fee. You cannot reschedule the exam less than five days before the exam date. For more details, please refer to the **CAHIMS Handbook**.

CAHIMS Certification Renewal—It Is Easier Than You Think!
- Now that you have earned your CAHIMS certification, HIMSS allows various avenues to reach your Continuing Education (CE credits within a three-year renewal cycle. According to the HIMSS Website for Certification Renewal, the **top reasons to renew your certification include**:
    - Remaining competitive in a tough job market

- Demonstrating your commitment to remaining curious and current in a rapidly evolving world of Healthcare IT

- Maintaining your credential

- Per HIMSS, CEs should be relevant to the healthcare information and management systems AND fall under one of the seven types listed below:
  - **CE Hours:** You can earn one CE hour for every sixty minutes of participation in educational programs.

  - **Academic Hours:** They can include post-secondary courses taken for an associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctorate**. The degree should be relevant to healthcare information and management systems.**

  - **Presentations:** Presenting your original work at an educational program can lead to one CE hour, depending on the forum used.

  - **Publications:** Publishing articles in journals, professional newsletters, or chapters in an edited book can be counted towards your CE hours.

  - **Professional Service:** Volunteering with a HIMSS approved professional organization or society can lead to you earning five CE hours for each year of service completed.

  - **Item Writing:** You can further explore opportunities writing for the CAHIMS exam by reaching out to certfication@himss.org

  - **Recertification by Examination:** You may choose to retake the exam instead of submitting documentation of earned CE hours.

  - For clarification of **non-qualifying CE activities**, please refer to the Candidate Handbook.

CPHIMS – Earning and Maintaining

Factors in Earning CPHIMS:
- Presented are **proven tactics, techniques, and methods** consistently used to pass the CPHIMS exam.

- The **Candidate Handbook** is the most crucial resource to begin your journey towards earning and maintaining the CPHIMS board certification! Review the Candidate Handbook in its entirety. It is found at https://www.himss.org/resources-certification/cphims-candidate-handbook.
  - Within the Candidate Handbook, review the **CPHIMS Examination Detained Content Outline** to familiarize yourself with the exam content.

- Within the Candidate Handbook, review the **Content Outline and Competency Gap Assessment**.

- Note that the CPHIMS exam is not a recollection of facts as the **exam includes experience-based practical application and analysis** of information to make the best decision.

● **CPHIMS Study Resources:**
  - **Develop a Learning Plan** and set aside deliberate time to study and prepare and is found at https://www.himss.org/resources-certification/cphims-learning-plan

  - Complete a **CPHIMS Competency Gap Assessment** to help determine your readiness, strengths, and weaknesses and is found at https://www.himss.org/resources-certification/cphims-competency-gap-assessment.

  - Complete the **CPHIMS Practice Exam at HIMSS Marketplace** to familiarize yourself with the CPHIMS Examination. Many, including myself, found this resource vital. The practice exam consists of 100-questions in a similar format as encountered on the CPHIMS exam. After completing the practice exam, thoroughly review the exam to understand why you did or did not get a question correct. One technique is to review all terminology and content presented in each of the answers. Although the exam is 100 questions, this technique allows gaining an additional 300 to 400 knowledge concepts. The HIMSS Marketplace is found at https://marketplace.himss.org/.

  - **The CPHIMS Review Guide,** currently 3rd Edition**,** is a must in preparing for the CPHIMS exam as the textbook reflects on most of the content present on the exam. Coupling with the CPHIMS Examination Detained Content Outline in the Candidate Handbook helps candidates cover all areas when preparing for the exam. The purchase of the Review Guide is through https://www.himss.org/resources/himss-books or https://www.routledge.com/.

  - **Participate in a CPHIMS Review Course** to test and grow your knowledge and apply it during real-life scenarios. Review Courses are usually offered at the annual HIMSS conference and through HIMSS resources found at https://www.himss.org/events/himss-cphims-review-course.

  - **"HIMSS Dictionary of Health Terms**, Acronyms, and Organizations" serves as a quick reference of health information technology terms. The dictionary can also be purchased through https://www.himss.org/resources/himss-books or https://www.routledge.com/.

  - **Use Other Study Resources** to grow your knowledge foundation. Keep in mind that **no single source** can prepare you for the exam. Candidates who have used a multi-approach have had the best success.

- **Study Techniques:**
  - One method is **writing down, researching any term or concept unfamiliar with,** and pulling that knowledge from reputable resources.

  - **Mimic the CPHIMS Examination and Environment.** Practice taking the CPHIMS Examination as you would take the Pearson VUE Test Centers or HIMSS Select events such as the HIMSS conference.

  - Explore **test-taking and anxiety-reducing techniques** to improve overall success if struggling in one or more of these areas.

- **To qualify** to sit for the CPHIMS Exam and earn the certification, you must first meet these eligibility requirements:
  - Hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university and

  - Have five years of information and management systems experience, with three years in a healthcare setting.
    OR
  - Hold a graduate degree or higher from an accredited college or university and

  - Have three years of information and management systems* experience, with two of those years in a healthcare setting.
    OR
  - Have at least ten years of information and management systems experience, with eight years in a healthcare setting.

- **CPHIMS Certification and Application Process is found at:**
  https://www.himss.org/resources-certification/cphims

- **Questions** on CPHIMS can be asked at certifications@himss.org.

- **Successful or Unsuccessful:**
  - **Successful with CPHIMS.** Please let me be one of the first to congratulate you on achieving a significant milestone!

  - **If unsuccessful**, learn and keep trying. Evaluate why and seek guidance from those who previously earned CPHIMS. Revise your plan, press forward, and achieve your goal.

  - The **reality** is that the CPHIMS exam is **one of the most challenging board certifications to achieve globally** and pulls from a broad body of knowledge. Through adequate preparation, hard work, and successful execution—you too can achieve your CPHIMS credential!

- When successful, please **update** your career records and resumes at once!

CPHIMS Certification Renewal—It Is Easier Than You Think!

- Completing **Continuing Education (CE's)** and the renewal cycle of CPHIMS demonstrates continued competence in HIMSS knowledge and leadership. Renewal criteria are found at https://www.himss.org/resources/certification-renewal.

- CPHIMS requires **45 CEs** during the three-year renewal cycle. A minimum of 24 of the 45 CEs must be from HIMSS or HIMSS-Approved Provider activities.

- An **"Approved Providers of Education" list for CEs** is maintained at HIMSS.org. Completing CEs with an approved provider counts as if the CE is HIMSS content. For example, the Department of Defense is an approved provider allowing Military, Federal Employees, and Contractors who attend healthcare courses or conferences to count this attendance as HIMSS Approved.

- The **Learning Center** contains a substantial library of free webinars to earn CE's and is found at https://www.himsslearn.org/.

- **Keep track of all CEs** using your method, and be sure to log in HIMSS to **ensure successful renewal** and risk losing your well-earned CPHIMS status!

- **Take Advantage of the Seven Types of CPHIMS CEs found at** https://www.himss.org/resources/certification-continuing-education**.**
    - **CE Hours:** You can earn one CE hour for every 60 minutes of participation in educational programs.

    - **Academic Hours:** They can include post-secondary courses taken for an associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctorate**. The degree should be relevant to healthcare information and management systems.**

    - **Presentations:** Presenting your original work at an educational program can lead to one CE hour, depending on the forum used.

    - **Publications:** Publishing articles in journals, professional newsletters, or chapters in an edited book can be counted towards your CE hours.

    - **Professional Service:** Volunteering with a HIMSS approved professional organization or society can lead to you earning five CE hours for each year of service completed.

    - **Item Writing:** You can further explore opportunities writing for the CPHIMS exam by reaching out to certfication@himss.org

    - **Recertification by Examination:** You may choose to retake the exam instead of submitting documentation of earned CE hours

    - For clarification of **non-qualifying CE activities**, please refer to the Candidate Handbook.

- Do not let your hard-earned CPHIMS certification expire due to the lack of Continuing Education Units (CEUs), as it may be challenging to re-earn the designation through re-passing the CPHIMS exam.

Advancing to Senior (SHIMSS) & Fellow (FHIMSS):
- Active HIMSS members are recognized for their dedication and substantial service to the HIMSS organization by advancing to SHIMSS or FHIMSS. **Advancement criteria are based on professional capability, experience, leadership, and service.** Senior and Fellow Members are leaders within HIMSS and the industry.

- Download the **Member Advancement Application** and begin tracking your progress.

- **Calculate and track your points** as you may have already achieved the required points for SHIMSS or FHIMSS.

- Identify any **gaps in points** and begin progression in those areas. For example, a candidate requires fifteen HIMSS points in Category Five or "Presentation and Publications." Candidates who lead or co-lead a **HIMSS Chapter Sponsored Webinar Presentation**, one hour in length, can be awarded five HIMSS points towards this category, leaving only ten remaining points.

LHIMSS Candidates may have accrued the points and time requirements to advance.

Conclusion:
- In closing, we both can personally attest to the significance of having applied HIMSS knowledge that broadened our personal and professional lives.

- The journey will be challenging and rewarding, be persistent and optimistic.

- The relationships you develop within the society are fruitful to you and the society's success.

- Start tracking now how you are meeting the requirements.

- Be sure to announce through social media your accomplishments and attend the HIMSS Advancement Reception.

Acronyms

Acronyms:
- **CE's** – Continuing Education is also known as Continuing Education Units
- **CAHIMS** – Certified Associate in Health Information and Management Systems
- **CPHIMS** – Certified Professional in Health Information Management Systems
- **FHIMSS** – Fellow Health Information Management and Systems Society
- **HIMSS** – Health Information Management and Systems Society
- **LHIMSS** – Life Health Information Management and Systems Society
- **NCA** – National Capital Area
- **PMP** – Project Management Professional
- **SHIMSS** – Senior Health Information Management and Systems Society

About the Authors

Jonathan Semple is a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force Medical Services Corps (MSC) stationed at Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, serving as the Administrator of the 47th Medical Group. He provides leadership and advisement to 168 personnel on a five million dollar budget and the thirty-four million dollar facility to deliver safe healthcare to 3,500 beneficiaries, 34,000 patient visits annually, and 350 newly trained pilots a year. He is a 2007 graduate from Regent University with a Master's of Business Administration and Leadership. Lt Col Semple has served in various MSC capacities, including Flight Commander, Group Practice Manager, and Headquarters Air Force staff. He previously deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan, as the Coalition Forces Theater Deputy Surgeon General. Lt Col Semple is dual board certified as a Certified Professional in Healthcare Information and Management Systems and as a Certified Medical Practice Executive. His systems experience includes serving as a Medical Information Systems Flight Commander providing support to a 380-person clinic.

Jasmine Kaur Jasmine Kaur is a military veteran and financial analyst at the Defense Health Agency based in Washington, D.C. Jasmine has close to a decade of experience managing electronic health record data, including deploying analytical solutions across healthcare organizations. In doing so, her goal has been to solve customers' technical challenges, reduce costs, and maximize enterprise profitability. Her proficiency with research for EHR/EMR systems includes literature reviews and desk-based research, quantitative analysis, data visualization, and generating presentations. Jasmine is a graduate of George Mason University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Care Administration. She also possesses a GMU graduate certificate in Health Informatics and Data Analytics. In addition, Jasmine is a Certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and a Certified Associate in Healthcare Information and Management Systems (CAHIMS). She is fluent in English, Punjabi, and Hindi.