News Item

Certification Association Established for PACS Administrators

Jan 28, 2004 – Aubrey TX, A new association has been established for the purpose of certifying PACS Administrators.

There is an increasing demand for healthcare technology professionals to support sophisticated and complex electronic medical imaging systems, i.e. PACS systems. These professionals need to be trained to achieve the required skills and keep up to date with new technologies. A new Association has been established, the PACS Administrators in Radiology Certification Association (aka PARCA), to develop criteria for the skills that are needed for these professionals, and to provide a certification for those that have proven to meet those requirements. PARCA is an independent organization, seeking direction regarding certification requirements, the certification process, curriculum, and examinations from a 5-7 member advisory board composed of vendors, users and academics.

"We had to learn it the hard way a few years back; now with training and education opportunities available from several sources, it is time to set standards for the required skill requirements and corresponding certification. I am therefore happy to participate as part of the PARCA advisory board to assist in this endeavor", according to Don Jollota, director of clinical services at Harris Methodist in Fort Worth.

Melissa Blado, PACS manager at Texas Children's in Houston agrees: *"Training in this new area is critical and we have therefore made sure to send our seven analysts that support the PACS system to training classes. Certification will definitely enhance the value of this type of education".*

"I have been involved with certification through HL7 and extending this standard to other standards such as DICOM and to the IHE Technical Frameworks. The many aspects that a PACS administrator deals with are very valuable and worthy of industry-wide credentials", according to Mike Henderson, who is president of Eastern Informatics and co-chair of the IHE infrastructure committee.

Herman Oosterwijk, president of OTech says: *"The question about certification is brought up in almost every class we teach. In addition, you only have to follow the discussion groups to know that this is a hot topic and definitely fills in an existing gap."*

PARCA offers three types of certifications, i.e. for a PACS Interface Analyst, PACS System Analyst and PACS System Manager (see details at www.pacsadmin.org) covering the various aspects of PACS administration. Both professionals with an IT or clinical background are able to get certified through their own track. The certification examinations can be taken online.

For information about this news item, contact PARCA's executive secretary Suzanne at Suzanne@pacsadmin.org.

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