

## **WELCOME to the American College of Health Care Administrators ND Rough Rider Chapter's AIT program!**

This AIT program provides on-site, hands on, supervised experiences totaling a minimum of one thousand hours for individuals who desire state licensure as a Nursing Home Administrator. The ACHCA program is approved by the North Dakota Board of Examiners. Based on prior managerial or other healthcare experiences, you may submit a waiver to reduce the number of required hours.

If you are interested in learning more about the waiver process you can contact Peggy Krikava by email at [peggy@ndltca.org](mailto:peggy@ndltca.org)

### **WHO ARE WE?**

The Rough Rider Chapter is the North Dakota affiliate of the **American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA)**.

ACHCA is the only professional association devoted solely to meeting the professional needs of today's long term care administrator. ACHCA defines excellence for the administrator with top quality educational programs and publications, as well as its exclusive professional certification program.

Besides offering the AIT program, the Rough Rider Chapter provides specialized educational opportunities, chapter meetings, networking with your peers, and various other forms of support.

### **FLEXIBLE PROGRAM**

The Administrator-In-Training Internship is a flexible program, adaptable to your needs. It starts when you first meet your Preceptor, leaving you twenty-four (24) months to complete the required one thousand hours of practical experience.

By using various assessment tools and the on-going relationship with your Preceptor, *YOU* design the program activities best suited to strengthen your areas of weakness and to provide exposure to the breadth of the profession.

### **CHAPTER COORDINATOR'S ROLE**

As Coordinator of the Rough Rider's AIT program, it is my function to connect each AIT Intern with a qualified Preceptor, send the required AIT manuals, maintain a file documenting your progress, and finally, to make written assurance to the ND Board of Examiners that you have successfully completed the program.

As Coordinator, I receive routine communication from AITs to assure that you are receiving a valuable and productive experience. The completion of the work within the timelines set by the state is the AIT's sole responsibility.

It is my job to manage any unforeseen compatibility problems between the AIT and the assigned Preceptor, and changes will be affected in a best effort to make the internship a positive one.

### **HOW IS THE PRECEPTOR CHOSEN?**

Preceptors are experienced Administrators who have received Board-approved training to help them design and monitor a quality AIT program. They give their time and expertise freely, with no remuneration or special recognition other than the satisfaction of helping you.

As Coordinator, I maintain a list of Preceptors who meet North Dakota requirements. Once the application and fee are in hand, and the AIT and I have spoken, I will secure a Preceptor based upon the following:

- a. Facility/City/State area most desired by AIT.
- b. Availability of Preceptors.
- c. AIT's educational and experiential needs.
- d. Facility's service strengths and location.

If you are employed in a facility and the Administrator is an approved Preceptor, you *may* take your AIT internship at your home facility.

### **CONCLUSION**

Review the enclosed documents and think about the kind of contributions you'd like to make to a facility that would "stretch" you and provide you with new and interesting experiences.

If at any time you have questions or concerns, call me at (701) 261-4132 or write me at my office:

Souris Valley Care Center  
Doug Panchot  
300 Main Street South  
Velva, ND 58790  
E-mail: [douglas.panchot@good-sam.com](mailto:douglas.panchot@good-sam.com)

If you are interested in the AIT program, just complete the application and mail it to me along with the appropriate fee, and the process begins! Bless you and do well!

*Doug Panchot, AIT Coordinator*

## ADMINISTRATOR-IN-TRAINING APPLICATION

(Note: a check or money order must accompany this application  
for **\$550.00** – made out to **ND Roughrider ACHCA**)

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_ DAY TIME PHONE#: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_ SS #: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you now, or have you been a licensed Nursing Home Administrator in  
North Dakota or another State? YES NO

If yes: \_\_\_\_\_  
State, license number, and date of expiration.

**\*Please attach resume detailing work and educational history.**

Summarize your long-term care experience to date: \_\_\_\_\_

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State your initial objectives in pursuing the AIT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Estimated date to begin the AIT: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated date of AIT completion: \_\_\_\_\_

(NOTE: Requirement is 1000 hours within 24 consecutive months.)

Cities and areas of the state where I would like to take my AIT  
(List in order of priority, please)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*"I declare that all of the foregoing is true and correct, and I authorize release of this information to potential Preceptors, the Roughrider Chapter of the American College of Health Care Administrators, and the North Dakota Board of Examiners for Nursing Home Administrators."*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Mail Application and Check to:

Baptist Health & Rehab  
Attn: Deanna Berg - Administrator  
ACHCA Treasurer  
3400 Nebraska Drive  
Bismarck, ND 58503-1649

# ***AIT HOURS***

## **“How do I complete these hours? Let me count the ways...”**

The major purpose of the Administrator-In-Training process is to experience the dynamic environment of Long-Term Care. Therefore, firsthand experience is what really matters. Likewise, time spent in preparation to do successful “hands-on” experiences also count.

The kinds of experiences that work toward the 1000-hour requirement are:

- Time spent organizing the program, completing AIT program documents, meetings with your Preceptor and Staff.
- Time spent in the facility (observing, interviewing staff, doing, researching, practicing, etc.).
- Time spent reading policies and procedures, studying facility forms and protocols, and other written materials as recommended by your Preceptor.
- Time spent reading State and Federal Regulations, rules, laws, and any other materials pertaining to business requirements. (Long Term Care is one of the most highly regulated industries, and you will need to be familiar with various rules and regulations.)
- Time spent in meetings, whether in or out of the facility. Visits to state agencies or to other health providers. Attendance at related seminars, workshops, meetings, and conventions, if your Preceptor approves them.

Any learning experience that you AND your Preceptor agree on is valid, practical training will be counted.

## **What absolutely does NOT count?**

- Travel time. For instance, an 8-hour day when 6 hours were spent visiting other facilities and 2 hours were “on the road” will only count as 6 hours of practical experience.
- **Any hour your Preceptor feels is “invalid” cannot and will not be counted.**

## **PRORATED REFUND POLICY**

*In the event an AIT wishes to cancel the internship, portions of the registration payment are refundable according to the following schedule:*

- If served less than 90 or 9% of required/approved hours:
  - \$400.00 Refund
- If served 81–170 hours or 17% of required/approved hours:
  - \$300.00 Refund
- If served 171–250 hours or 25% of required/approved hours:
  - \$170.00 Refund
- If served 251–420 hours or 42% of required/approved hours:
  - \$85.00 Refund

There is no refund if more than 420 hours or more than 42% of required/approved hours has been completed of the AIT Internship.

If absolutely no hours have been served, a refund of \$500.00 will be granted.

## **The program from the Preceptor's Point of View**

**A Preceptor functions as a Coordinator and a Consultant.**

**All the responsibility for learning and achieving rests with the AIT Intern.**

### **The Preceptor:**

1. Helps create and approves a working plan that provides 1000 hours of experience in the areas that the AIT most needs administrative exposure.
2. Routinely meets (at least weekly) to provide dialogue, modeling of management, and mentor-like guidance.
3. Arranges for appropriate staff to provide experiences, share knowledge and supervise projects for the AIT. (Ex. 2 weeks with the DON).
4. Signs off on the AIT's report of hours, which is submitted to me every 4 weeks. The Preceptor is the sole arbiter as to whether the hours spent in each activity will count or not.
5. Helps arrange contacts outside of the facility so that 5-10% of the Internship includes exposure to other health care environments, outside educational events, and the continuum of care.
6. Handles any difficulties the AIT may experience with the subject matter, or staff and resident contact.
7. Shares insights, knowledge, and wisdom with the AIT; acts as a friendly source of inspiration and education.

### **How the Program Works**

*The Roughrider Chapter of the ACHCA provides oversight of the Administrator-in-Training program. Individuals make an application to the AIT Coordinator to start the internship.*

The AIT Coordinator's function is to connect each AIT Intern with a qualified preceptor, arrange for the Intern to get the NAB manual, maintain a file documenting their progress, and finally, to make written assurance to the ND Board of Examiners of the Intern's successful completion of the program.

The coordinator maintains routine communication with the AIT and the Preceptor to assure that the AIT is receiving a valuable productive experience, and that timeliness is being met.

The coordinator also oversees any compatibility problems between the AIT and the preceptor, and changes will be affected in a best effort to make the Internship a positive one.

### **How a Preceptor is Chosen**

Preceptors are experienced Administrators who have received Board-approved training to help them design and monitor a quality Internship that is tailored to an individual's needs. They give their time and expertise freely, with no remuneration or special recognition other than the satisfaction of helping someone in the field.

The coordinator secures a Preceptor based on:

- a. facility/city/area of state most desired by the AIT
- b. availability of the preceptor
- c. the AIT's educational and experiential needs
- d. the facility's services, strengths, and location

If an AIT is employed by a facility whose Administrator meets Preceptor qualifications, we will approve that internship.

AITs are not required to receive pay or stipends for the internship. If they are employed by the facility, obviously they will be paid according to their employment agreement.

### **What About Reports?**

The AIT is solely responsible for preparing and sending reports documenting the on-going progress. It is advisable to get the preceptor's signature on each report to validate the number of hours.

Once one thousand hours are completed, the final summary report is written by the AIT, and must be signed by the Preceptor. The Preceptor then writes a narrative evaluation as to the AIT's suitability to be a Nursing Home Administrator. At that point, the Preceptor job is done.

### **NOTES:**

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*The National Association of Board of Examiners for Nursing Home Administrators has created a great AIT program that we have chosen to use. You will find that this eliminates much of the guesswork as the Preceptor. However, I hasten to add that you are free to supplement the basic program to make it a rich experience for your AIT.*

*The NAB program is grouped around the domains of practice found in administration. They break each domain into discrete tasks and functions.*

Obviously, since the whole of our work is greater than the sum of its parts, this approach has limitations. But it certainly provides you and your staff a good starting place from which to design a 1000-hour program, individualized to meet the AIT's honest, experiential needs.

The NAB manual is available to review on the NAB website. It is recommended to review the information prior to the start of the internship. The Preceptor should have a good understanding of the AIT Training Manual prior to the start of the process. The manual contains:

1. A self-assessment instrument which identifies the AIT's strength and weakness relating to the domains of practice. This helps you tailor the program to their needs.
2. General program information (includes blank report forms). Useful to the AIT in directing self-study and helps them identify pertinent questions to ask, areas of interest, and general information for both of you.
3. Additional guidance, such as a model AIT program which you can follow or deviate from, to help you identify those educational areas where you will want to connect the AIT with someone more expert than yourself. EXAMPLE: If you have a financial person who deals with Medicare and Medicaid cost reports, which should be the expert, you choose to show the AIT how the system works.

***Remember, if you have any questions or concerns at any time, simply contact the AIT Coordinator.***

Souris Valley Care Center  
Doug Panchot, LNHA  
300 Main Street South  
Velva, ND 58790  
Phone: 701-261-4132  
E-mail: douglas.panchot@good-sam.com

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## 1. Can the AIT Internship be completed in more or less than 6 months?

**Yes.** The requirement is for a **minimum of 1000 hours** completed within **24 consecutive months**.

At 40 hours per week, 960 hours will take 6 months (24 weeks) to complete. If you could serve 50 hours per week, you would satisfy the minimum in just 20 weeks (5 months).

Working 20 hours per week means it will take a little more than 12 months to finish the 1000-hour requirement.

The pace at which you work is up to you – if your Preceptor is satisfied that the hours are valid and meeting educational expectations.

## 2. Can one do *more* than the 1000 hours?

**Yes.** 1000 is the minimum number of hours, unless you have been approved for the waiver for fewer hours. If you believe additional hours are necessary to meet some personal or professional goals, then you can take as much time as you want to fulfill the learning objectives within the 24-month period.

## 3. Can a facility have more than one AIT?

**ONLY if more than one qualified Preceptor works there.** Since we want the AIT/Preceptor collaboration to be productive, we need to limit that relationship to one Intern at a time.

- **There is the possibility where one preceptor could have two AITs at one time. This will be handled on a case-by-case basis.**

## 4. Can an AIT be an employee of the facility in which they do the Internship?

**Yes.** North Dakota is a rural state, and it only makes sense to try and keep the Internship as “local” as possible. The goals of the AIT Internship are not compromised, especially since the Preceptor will assure that the AIT has experience and exposure to all the domains of practice attending Administration.

**5. Can the AIT and the Preceptor be related?**

**Yes.** It is possible for an AIT and a Preceptor to be related and still complete the program. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to make sure there is a design in the program so that the student learns about the profession. The program will try to make every effort to see that the AIT has opportunities to look at other facilities as well so there is not the conflict that could be perceived by having a Preceptor be a close relative.

**6. Can the AIT be paid?**

**Yes.** The facility can offer a stipend or can outright employ the AIT. Some companies even have formal job classifications for AIT's.

However, **no guarantee of income is made or implied.** Financial arrangements are at the discretion of the facility and most AITs are unpaid.

In all cases, Preceptors offer their expertise, time, and guidance (not to mention the expertise and time of their staff) on a pro-bono basis. This is without exception. AITs essentially perform all their internship duties without expectation of remuneration.

**7. How much of the AIT Internship must be outside of the host facility?**

**About 5-10% (50-100 hours).** AIT's need exposure to the height and breadth of healthcare, so it is expected that visits to other facilities, time spent with various providers of alternative levels of care, and attendance at educational events would be arranged to meet this goal.

**8. If the Preceptor permanently leaves the facility, can the AIT complete the Internship at that facility?**

**Yes, BUT...** the Preceptor must be replaced by an Administrator who is already qualified as a Preceptor; otherwise, the AIT will have to be relocated. (Of course, the AIT keeps credit for all hours served up to that point.)

**9. What if the Preceptor and the AIT do not get along?**

Then either one must contact the AIT Coordinator who will find a new Preceptor. The AIT keeps credit for all hours served to that point.

Obviously, a compatibility problem or the loss of a Preceptor are rare occurrences, but both the AIT and the Preceptor need to know that new assignments can be made at no undue loss of credit for the AIT.

**10. What if the AIT can't complete the Internship in 24 months?**

Then extensions can be granted on a case-by-case basis. Health emergencies and pregnancies would be obvious mitigating circumstances. The granting of an extension would work much in the same way as a facility grants a leave of absence. Frankly, this will have to be carefully **coordinated by the AIT** among the Preceptor, the AIT Coordinator, and the Board of Examiners. If there is a problem, the AIT must seize the initiative.

We ask that if you are struggling to finish things up, communicate – communicate – communicate!

**Never Assume!** If one needs extra time due to unforeseen circumstances, then one must communicate quickly and effectively with all parties involved. This responsibility rests solely with the AIT.

**11. Can an AIT take a “break” and return to finish the Internship?**

**Yes.** However, all one thousand hours must be completed within 24 consecutive months. If an AIT takes a break and only completes 963 hours by the end of the 24-month period, NONE of those hours can carry over! A whole new Internship will have to be arranged and paid for.

If an AIT quits the program, the hours “earned” are only valid during that original 24 consecutive month period. If the same AIT returns to the program, the previous hours only count if they are within the original time frame from the original start date. The AIT needs to complete the entire 1000 hours within 24 months of the original start date.

Obviously, one shouldn't enter this program lightly. Commitment and dedication (the same two hallmarks of successful administrative leadership) are required to complete the AIT.

## **12. Can an AIT simply quit the program?**

**Yes.** If an AIT wishes to cancel the Internship, an exit interview with the Preceptor and a phone call or letter to the AIT Coordinator is all that is required to terminate the program.

If an AIT quits the program, portions of the registration may be refundable according to the Prorated Refund Policy. If a refund is not asked for, it will not be given. Again, the initiative belongs to the AIT.