RESEARCH BRIEF:

ATI Allied Health Study Aids Shown to Effectively Prepare Students for NHA Certification Exams

The need for qualified healthcare workers is expected to grow by 33% in the next decade and allied healthcare professionals can demonstrate that they have the knowledge needed to enter the workforce by passing healthcare certification exams. ATI Allied Health has developed a suite of study aids designed to assist students and professionals prepare for National Healthcareer Association (NHA) certification exams. This paper outlines the benefits associated with ATI Allied Health's practice tests and study guides as preparatory tools for several NHA certification exams. ATI Allied Health study guides and practice tests are found to predict higher pass rates across multiple NHA certification exams.

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) predicts that growth in the healthcare and social assistance industry will account for 28% of all new jobs in the U. S. between 2010 and 2020 (BLS, 2012). The healthcare industry is expected to grow by 33% as more than 5.7 million new healthcare workers will be needed (BLS, 2012). Training qualified allied healthcare workers will be critical to filling this expected workforce demand. One way students can demonstrate their readiness to enter the healthcare workforce is by obtaining healthcare certifications, such as those developed by the National Healthcareer Association (NHA). Obtaining a certification may even be a deciding factor in a hiring or promotion decision (ICE, 2009).

In order to help students succeed on NHA certification exams, ATI Allied Health (ATI-AH) has developed a comprehensive suite of certification study aids. These study aids include practice tests and study guides for each of the different certification exam types offered by NHA. The ATI-AH practice tests were designed to help students assess their knowledge of topics that are likely to appear on the various certification exams. Students are allowed to take an online practice test multiple times to assess their knowledge at different points in the certification exam preparation process. Study guides are based on NHA's exam blueprint and are created by content experts in each exam's field of practice. Together, these study aids allow students to review key topics and material likely to be included on the certification exam as well as test their knowledge of these topics multiple times if needed.

This paper investigates how ATI-AH study aids help students succeed on the following NHA healthcare certification exams:

- NHA Certified Phlebotomy Technician (CPT) exam
- NHA Certified EKG Technician (CET) exam
- NHA Certified Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA) exam
- NHA Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) exam
- NHA Certified Electronic Health Records Specialist (CEHRS) exam

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The purchase of ATI Allied Health certification exam preparation materials or other educational products is not required to sit for any NCCA-Accredited certification exams offered by NHA.

METHODOLOGY

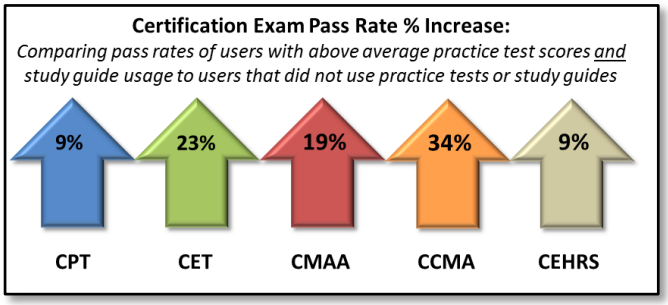
All analyses in this paper use data from students who took one or more of the 5 NHA certification exams in 2012. Students could have taken these certification exams up to 3 times during this timeframe; however, to allow for consistency across analyses, only scores from a student's first certification exam attempt were used. Furthermore, as California uses a modified test plan for the CPT exam, all California CPT exam data was excluded for the purposes of this paper's analyses. Usage data for the online study guide and online practice test were obtained from ATI-AH. Certification exam data was obtained from NHA. This paper was unable to examine usage for students who purchased the printed study guide and, as such, all study guide specific analyses reflect online study guide usage only.

RESULTS

Students' usage of ATI-AH study aids was consistently associated with higher pass rates on NHA exams. For the 5 certifications evaluated in this paper, at least 90% of users with above average scores on practice tests passed their certification exam on the first attempt. Furthermore, in order to understand how combining certification prep tools related to exam performance, two examinee groups were compared. The first group (effective study aid users) consisted of students with above average practice scores and study guide usage. The second group was comprised of NHA examinees that used neither study guides nor practice tests. For all 5 exam types, effective study aid users had higher certification exam pass rates than did students who did not use these certification study aids (see Figure 1).

For the 5 certifications evaluated in this paper, at least 90% of users with above average scores on practice tests passed their certification exam on the first attempt

Figure 1. % Increase in certification exam pass rates for non-users of study aids compared to students with effective usage of study aids



CONCLUSION

The research outlined in this paper highlights the beneficial impact that ATI-AH study aids have when used to prepare for NHA certification exams. Certification exam scores are higher for students who use both the online study guide and the online practice test. In addition, for students who scored above average on the practice test, the average first time pass rates on NHA certification exams was at least 90%. Having the tools needed to pass a certification exam can help students demonstrate to employers that they have the subject mastery needed to enter the workforce. With the number of healthcare jobs expected to grow significantly over the next decade, providing tools to students that help them prepare to enter the workforce will be increasingly important to answer the growing demand for qualified allied healthcare workers.

REFERENCES

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2012-13 Edition, Projections Overview, from http://www.bls.gov/ooh/about/projections-overview.htm (visited on October 15, 2012).

Institute for Credentialing Excellence (2009). Certification: The ICE Handbook, 2nd Edition.

If you have any questions regarding this paper or its findings, please do not hesitate to contact us at: info@atialliedhealth.com