



## **Coalition for Leadership in Aging Services (CLAS)** *(Formerly the RHP Program)*

### **Frequently Asked Questions About Our Name Changes**

**1. What does CLAS stand for?**

CLAS is an acronym for the Coalition for Leadership in Aging Services. Effective September 1, 2006, the National Certification Program for Retirement Housing Professionals (RHP) changed its name to CLAS.

**2. What does CASP stand for?**

The RHP credential has been renamed Certified Aging Services Professional (CASP), reflecting its holistic perspective of aging and the inclusion of content relating to the broad array of retirement housing and supportive services that has emerged in recent years. These changes respond to emerging models of care and service delivery in retirement housing and will better position certification holders to meet the needs of the next generation of older persons.

**3. What are the benefits of graduating from the CASP program?**

CASP graduates and CASP Fellows become part of a growing network of aging services professionals. You will receive copies of the "CLAS Act," a bi-annual newsletter written specifically for CASP candidates and graduates, and benefit from the use of the "CASP Lounge," a room reserved solely for the use of CASP candidates and graduates each year at the AAHSA Annual Meeting. You also benefit from special CASP Fellow workshops and sessions on "hot" topics at AAHSA's Annual Meeting. Furthermore, you have the opportunity to remain involved in the program by serving as a mentor or reviewer for current and future candidates. Most significantly, your CASP and CASP Fellow credential identifies you as a professional who believes in a philosophy of excellence, and who strives to be a leader in the field. Some organizations may give preference in employment to CASP graduates because certification demonstrates your commitment to those qualities.

**4. Why are CASP Core Courses no longer offered in conjunction with the AAHSA Annual Meeting?**

Because of the close collaboration between CLAS and AAHSA, two of the three core courses have previously been offered 4 days prior to the AAHSA's Annual Meeting. Although CLAS will continue to maintain a strong presence at the meeting, beginning in 2006 a CLAS pre-conference on an advanced educational topic will be offered instead of core courses. This was a joint decision between CLAS and AAHSA and was based on feedback over the past 5 years that suggested that asking AAHSA members to spend 30 hours (4 days) in a classroom and then another 3 or 4 days at the AAHSA meeting was too demanding. We also received negative feedback because only two of the three core courses could be offered in that time. As a result we decided to change the Fall Program into an Institute format and offer 6 days of training in either 6-day sessions or a 4 and 2 day set of sessions.

**5. Will CLAS offer educational opportunities during the AAHSA Annual Meeting?**

Yes, CLAS will offer two educational opportunities at the AAHSA Annual Meeting. Prior to the meeting, a CLAS pre-conference session covering an advanced educational topic will be offered. During the meeting, the CASP Fellow Workshop will continue to be included as a part of AAHSA's educational sessions. To register, please refer to the AAHSA Annual Meeting booklet.

**6. When does the current name National Certification Program for Retirement Housing Professionals (RHP) change to the Coalition for Leadership in Aging Services (CLAS)?**

The official date of the name change was September 1, 2006.

**7. If I hold the designation of RHP or RHPF, will additional course work be required to obtain the CASP or CASPF certification?**

If you hold a RHP or RHP Fellow certification, it automatically changed to CASP or CASPF on September 1, 2006; graduates were sent a new certificate soon after that date. Graduates who have maintained their certification and were current received their CASP or CASPF certificates in 2006.

**8. Why did the National Certification Program for Retirement Housing Professionals (RHP) change its name?**

In recent years, we have witnessed the breakdown in barriers between levels of care, first on the CCRC campus, and later reaching out into the wider community. The relationship between housing and services now focuses on housing as a site for delivering care to seniors. State and federal funding sources, recognizing that the current model of health care delivery to seniors is not sustainable for the growing senior population, is beginning to focus on bringing services to where people live as a less expensive and more desirable location for care.

The University of North Texas, The American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, and RHP have always focused on the needs of older persons rather than a particular location where care is delivered. The integration of senior housing and the needs of persons aging in place have caused the RHP curriculum to be expanded to include leadership, human resource administration, facility design, food service delivery, and a host of other topics.

The magnitude of this change has become so pronounced that it has become clear that the term Retirement Housing Professional is no longer a description of the persons seeking certification or the educational experience provided by the RHP program. Over the past two years, the RHP advisory committee has sought to find a name that would be more consistent with current practice and future trends. In this process they were concerned that previous RHP graduates, who have distinguished themselves through years of professional achievement, not feel abandoned or be given the impression that the focus on housing is diminished in any way.

The reality is that housing is assuming a new prominence in the provision of services by addressing a wider range of seniors' needs. Professional leadership in this new era will require a broader outlook and wider range of skills at all levels.

It is in that context the UNT will expand its professional training under the new name Coalition for Leadership in Aging Services (CLAS).

**For more information** visit <http://www.unt.edu/aging/clas>, or contact the CLAS staff at [clas@unt.edu](mailto:clas@unt.edu). (940) 565-2733. University of North Texas, CLAS Program, P.O. Box 310919, Denton, Texas 76203.