

# POSITION PAPER: DEFINING AN EXPERT IN HEALTHCARE VALUE ANALYSIS

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## INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly complex healthcare landscape, the role of healthcare value analysis professionals is vital to ensuring that healthcare organizations make informed, cost-effective decisions regarding the procurement and use of medical products, technologies, and services. These professionals are expected to balance clinical excellence with financial stewardship, leading efforts to enhance patient outcomes, improve care quality, and reduce costs. However, as the demand for expertise in this field grows, so does the risk of individuals presenting themselves as "experts" without the requisite experience, credentials, or commitment to continuous learning. This expanded position paper outlines what constitutes a true expert in healthcare value analysis and emphasizes the importance of thoroughly vetting professionals to ensure they meet the highest standards of the field.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CORE COMPETENCIES AND DIVERSE EXPERIENCE

A true expert in healthcare value analysis is characterized by a deep and broad understanding of the healthcare system, encompassing both clinical and financial dimensions. This expertise is developed through a diverse range of experiences across various aspects of healthcare, including clinical operations, supply chain management, procurement, and financial analysis.

- **Clinical and Operational Insight:** Authentic experts possess a strong grasp of clinical practices and the impact of medical products on patient outcomes. This insight is not theoretical but is grounded in real-world experience working closely with clinical teams, such as nurses, physicians, and other healthcare providers. This experience is essential for understanding the practical implications of product selection and usage, ensuring that decisions are both clinically sound and aligned with patient care needs.
- **Financial Acumen:** In addition to clinical knowledge, a true expert in healthcare value analysis is proficient in financial analysis and resource management. This includes the ability to evaluate the total cost of ownership of medical products, assess the financial impact of procurement decisions, and identify opportunities for cost savings without compromising care quality. These skills are developed through hands-on experience in budgeting, cost accounting, and contract negotiation, making them indispensable in the value analysis process.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Experts in value analysis excel in collaboration across disciplines, working with stakeholders from various departments to ensure that decisions are made with a comprehensive understanding of their implications. Their ability to lead or participate in cross-functional teams is a testament to their diverse experience and their ability to bridge gaps between different areas of expertise.

- **The Role of Professional Credentialing Certification in Establishing Expertise:** While diverse experience is foundational, board certification serves as a formal acknowledgment of a professional's expertise in healthcare value analysis. The Certified Value Analysis Healthcare Professional (CVAHP) board certification is a critical credential that distinguishes true experts from those who may lack the necessary depth of knowledge and skills. The CVAHP certification, offered by the AHVAP Certification Center, is recognized as the gold standard in the field of healthcare value analysis. It requires candidates to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of value analysis principles, including evidence-based decision-making, cost-benefit analysis, and ethical considerations in procurement. Achieving this certification signifies that a professional has met rigorous standards of knowledge and practice, which is essential for those seeking to establish themselves as true experts in the field.
- **Ongoing Professional Development:** Maintaining CVAHP certification involves continuous education and professional development, ensuring that certified professionals remain up to date with the latest trends and best practices in healthcare value analysis. This commitment to lifelong learning is a hallmark of true expertise, distinguishing certified professionals from those who may rely on outdated knowledge or superficial understanding of the field.

Healthcare Organizations and Leaders Should Carefully Consider the following Key Points before engaging with any consultant, consulting firm, or other potential Industry Partner on healthcare value analysis initiatives:

- **The Risk of Unqualified Individuals Claiming Expertise:** As the demand for healthcare value analysis expertise grows, there is an increasing risk of individuals presenting themselves as "experts" without the requisite experience, credentials, or commitment to ongoing professional development. These individuals may lack the depth of knowledge and the practical experience necessary to make informed decisions that impact patient outcomes, financial performance, and overall care quality.
- **Superficial Knowledge vs. True Expertise:** Unqualified individuals may have a basic understanding of value analysis concepts but lack the detailed knowledge and practical experience required to navigate the complexities of healthcare procurement and resource management. They may present themselves as experts based on limited exposure to the field or a superficial understanding of the key principles, leading to decisions that are not grounded in evidence or best practices. This can result in poor procurement choices, inefficient resource utilization, and even risks to patient safety.
- **The Importance of Vetting Professionals:** To ensure that healthcare organizations are guided by true experts, it is essential to thoroughly vet value analysis professionals. This includes verifying their credentials, such as CVAHP certification, and assessing their track record of experience in diverse aspects of healthcare value analysis. Organizations should look for professionals who have demonstrated a commitment to continuous learning, as evidenced by their pursuit of advanced certifications, micro-credentials, and active participation in professional organizations such as AHVAP.

- **Consequences of Unqualified Leadership:** The consequences of allowing unqualified individuals to lead value analysis initiatives can be significant. Poor decision-making can lead to the selection of suboptimal products, resulting in increased costs, reduced care quality, and even harm to patients. In contrast, true experts bring a depth of knowledge and experience that ensures procurement decisions are both cost-effective and aligned with the highest standards of patient care.
- **AHVAP Certification Center Micro-Credentials and Professional Engagement:** In addition to the CVAHP certification, the AHVAP Certification Center offers micro-credentials that allow value analysis professionals to specialize in specific areas of the field. These micro-credentials provide targeted education and recognition in niche areas, further enhancing a professional's expertise and value to their organization.
- **Additional Specialization and Micro-Credentials:** The field of healthcare value analysis is broad, and the ability to specialize in areas such as data analytics, sustainability, or clinical integration can significantly enhance a professional's effectiveness. Micro-credentials offer a way for professionals to gain and demonstrate expertise in these specialized areas, making them more versatile and capable of addressing the complex challenges faced by healthcare organizations.
- **Career Advancement and Professional Engagement:** Earning micro-credentials not only broadens a professional's skill set but also positions them for career advancement. By demonstrating expertise in multiple areas of value analysis, professionals can take on more complex and strategic roles within their organizations, ultimately leading to leadership positions where they can have a greater impact on healthcare delivery and cost management.
- **Professional Memberships and Continuous Engagement:** Beyond certification and education, active engagement in the professional community is a critical component of expertise in healthcare value analysis. This includes membership in professional organizations, participation in conferences and workshops, and contribution to the broader discourse on value analysis and healthcare improvement. The professional should be actively engaged with healthcare facilities and professionals on a regular basis through collaboration, partnership, and/or research.
- **AHVAP Membership and Networking:** Membership in the Association of Healthcare Value Analysis Professionals (AHVAP) is essential for those seeking to establish themselves as true experts in the field. AHVAP provides access to a wealth of resources, including educational opportunities, networking events, and industry research. Active participation in AHVAP allows professionals to stay connected with peers, share best practices, and contribute to the advancement of the value analysis profession.
- **Contribution to the Field:** True experts are not only consumers of knowledge but also contributors to the field. This may involve publishing articles, delivering accredited webinars, presenting at national conferences, or participating in research initiatives. By sharing their knowledge and experiences, value analysis professionals help to shape the future of the profession and contribute to the continuous improvement of healthcare delivery.

The field of healthcare value analysis is complex, and true expertise is defined by a combination of diverse experience, formal education and credentialing, specialized knowledge, and active engagement in the professional community. While some may claim expertise without the necessary qualifications, it is essential for healthcare organizations to thoroughly vet value analysis professionals and potential consultants/industry partners to ensure they possess the requisite skills and knowledge to make informed, evidence-based decisions.

The Certified Value Analysis Healthcare Professional (CVAHP™) certification, along with additional specialization thru the pursuit of AHVAP Certification micro-credentials and active participation in professional organizations, are key indicators of true expertise. These credentials demonstrate a commitment to continuous learning and excellence in the field, distinguishing true experts from those who may lack the depth of knowledge required to navigate the complexities of healthcare value analysis.

As the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, the role of value analysis professionals will become even more critical in guiding organizations through the challenges and opportunities of the future. By embracing their leadership role and committing to the highest standards of practice, healthcare value analysis professionals can ensure that healthcare organizations deliver high-quality, cost-effective care that meets the needs of patients and communities.

## **CHECKLIST OF CORE QUESTIONS TO ASK CONSULTANT, CONSULTING FIRM, OR OTHER POTENTIAL INDUSTRY PARTNERS PRIOR TO ENGAGING IN A NEW INITIATIVE**

1. Is the potential partner currently board certified in healthcare value analysis and hold the CVAHP designation? To verify current certification and/or micro-credential status, visit: <https://www.ahvap.org/cvahp-credential-verification>.
2. Is the potential partner a current and active member of the Association of Healthcare Value Analysis Professionals (AHVAP)?
3. Does the potential partner serve on any national committees, working groups, or other recognized industry groups specific to healthcare value analysis?
4. Does the potential partner have robust training in healthcare value analysis from a reputable, national organization such as the Association of Healthcare Value Analysis Professionals (AHVAP)?
5. Does the potential partner have references from other clients or former colleagues available?
6. What specialized training does the potential partner have in healthcare value analysis?
7. What specialized training does the potential partner have in other specializations such as healthcare quality, patient safety, clinical research, etc.?
8. Does the potential partner hold additional professional certifications in related fields?
9. Does the potential partner hold recognition or designations from their professional national association or certification body validating their expertise in their respective specialty?