Message from your PTA Advocate

Are Times Changing?

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Every spring, just prior to APTA’s NEXT Conference and Exposition, APTA’s House of Delegates (House) gathers to discuss and vote on issues pertaining to our profession. The House is comprised of voting delegates from each chapter, non-voting delegates (APTA Board of Directors and section, assembly and PTA Caucus delegates) and consultants. For 3 successive days, over 400 Physical Therapists (PT) and Physical Therapist Assistants (PTA) discuss issues pertaining to the association and the profession of physical therapy. Only the elected Physical Therapist Delegates from each chapter vote on the motions. This year’s House will be held in National Harbor, Maryland from June 1 – 3, 2015.

During the 2015 House, there will be 3 motions forwarded from APTA’s Board of Directors (Board) that are relevant to the PTA. If adopted, these motions will require amendments to APTA’s bylaws and will be monumental in moving forward with the participation of the Physical Therapist Assistant in the governance of APTA.

Here is some background on where those motions came from. In 2012, during the PTA Caucus business meeting prior to the House, there were 6 goals established by the caucus: expansion of PTA entry level education; expansion of post entry-level education and specialization to include designation; active participation in governance at all levels; promotion and protection of payment for PTA services; expansion of scope of work and promotion of the PT/PTA team. In 2013, APTA President Paul Rockar appointed a PTA Board Work Group to address these goals. It was comprised of 4 PTAs, 4 board members and 2 APTA staff. This group met often to discuss the goals and how to achieve them. The PTA Board Work Group presented their report to APTA’s Board of Directors in April 2014. During this meeting, (http://www.apta.org/BOD/Meetings/) the Board adopted 8 motions related to the PTA, 3 of which are the possible bylaw changes being presented to the House in 2015.

**PTA member eligibility to serve in a non-officer position on the Board.** This means that a PTA may be nominated for and run beside a Physical Therapist for a board of director position. This is not a designated position on the Board. A non-officer position means that a PTA may not run for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or House Speaker/Vice Speaker positions. As a board member, the PTA will represent all members of APTA and participate on an equal
level with other PT Board members. Currently, PTAs serve in positions of leadership in other related areas such as state boards of physical therapy, CAPTE (Commission on Accreditation of Physical Therapy Education), and FSBPT (Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy).

Allowing components the option to amend their bylaws to provide PTA members a full vote at the component level. A component is your chapter/state. Currently, PTAs have ½ vote at the component level where PTs have a full vote (see section 2 of APTA bylaws). Allowing each component the option of changing their bylaws, respects the rights of components to make this determination. Currently, no other medical association provides voting members ½ vote and there is no reference in Roberts Rules of Order addressing ½ vote.

Allowing chapters the option to amend their bylaws to permit PTA members to serve as chapter delegates. This motion also respects the decision of each component to make the determination of change. If adopted by the House and then the component, PTAs will run beside PTs for the position of delegate in their respective chapter to serve in the House. A PTA in this position will represent all members of their chapter and our profession.

Motions that will be forwarded to the 2015 House are currently being discussed on The HUB, which is a communication page for open discussion for delegates attending the House. The HUB contains a number of other topics relevant to our association which is open to membership. I encourage all APTA members to become familiar with what occurs during the House of Delegates. Decisions are made that impact our profession and you as a member of APTA. Please visit http://www.apta.org/HOD/ to find your chapter’s delegates, to review the 2014 House minutes and to visit The HUB.