



American Physical Therapy Association
New Hampshire Chapter

NEWSLETTER

December 2003



The President's Farewell Column

Susan C. Abis, PT
President, NHAPTA

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"Some people see things as they are, and ask why? I dream of things that never were, and ask, Why not?" -George Bernard Shaw

The past 4 years have been ones of great tumult for me, both personally and professionally. I am happy to say though, they have been ones of extreme growth in many arenas. As I tentatively grabbed the reins in December of 1999 as your chapter president- I had no idea what was in store, and fervently hoped I wouldn't screw up too badly. I remember my very first president's meeting- New Orleans, 2000 (no comments from anyone please about my extra-curricular activities...). As I glanced about the room and saw people I had only read about in journals and who literally had alphabet soup after their names, I wondered if I might be headed for trouble!

We began that first year here in New Hampshire with a push toward our first New Hampshire APTA web site. Simple, yet functional. I believe we had perhaps 100 or so hits in 2000 (we won't tell you how many of them were mine!). This progressed in the year 2002 to a contracted professional web site with Caduceus web- complete with our newsletter, ongoing news, pictures, and updates on legislation. We also began a chapter interactive list serve, which has grown steadily in usage and subscribers. It has been our hope to be able to educate all physical therapists about the important changes happening, as well as to provide a means for physical therapists to communicate with one another.

Of course, 2002 was an interesting year- given a full practice act revision by our Board of Allied Health. APTA supported this endeavor by attending legislative hearings, as well as sponsoring a legislative fitness day at our state house- complete with news coverage on WMUR!

Sometimes I wonder if my more learned colleagues (the ones with the alphabet soup after their names), might have "quaked in their boots" as bad as I did those first few years. I then realize that they are the leaders of our profession- the people who have given us a vision to work to-

ward over the years. A doctoring profession- the DPT- autonomous practice without MD referral. I could never have dreamed these things in 1983 when I left PT school. I think I sat there for the first few years, gloomily looking at physician referrals saying "hot packs, ultrasound, massage, William's Flexion" and drearily following orders, thinking "Why?"- while they were out there dreaming "Why not?" and laying the groundwork for independent practice, research and outcome based practice, and direct access.

I met with some physical therapists and physical therapist assistants recently to discuss more active participation and involvement in committees of the New Hampshire APTA- most of the replies I received were "Why?". There are so many reasons! The \$1590 cap on therapy services has recently been re-imposed, effective 9/1/2003. When our members of Congress hear from hundreds of therapists and patients across our state about why this is so critical, they will listen. In June of this year, nearly 2000 therapists marched on our Capitol, with a battle cry of "Why not?" for direct access under the Medicare program. While we still dream of this for a future reality, it has been made a component of S1- the Medicare Drug Act. A budget neutral, 5 state, 3 year demonstration program has been proposed which will assess the safety and efficacy of direct access under the Medicare program. Go ahead- DREAM "WHY NOT?!" Call your member of Congress and demand "Why Not?"

2003 also saw some legislative challenges by realizing that our legislature and new governor would be looking to remove "optional services" from medicaid coverage. Physical Therapists across our state rallied to the cause, calling members of the senate finance committee to voice their outrage at what this would do to our patients (let's face it- none of US actually get rich on medicaid payments...). The message was heard loud and clear about how drastically cutting physical therapy and other services would affect the people of New Hampshire. Fortunately, these were reinstated in the final draft of the budget. Chairman Green was even overheard to tell our physical therapy lobbyist "Tell your people to back off!"

Continued on page 4





Watch your mail. . .

Your Continuing Education Committee has been working on the 2004 Evening Schedule.

The first program will be given Jan 22, with a snow date of Jan 29, at the Holiday Inn, Concord.

See the brochure for registration information after Christmas

President's Farewell Column

Continued from Page 1

The proliferation of physician ownership in physical therapy practices across the state in the past few years has been of growing concern to our profession. Not only does this hinder the growth of therapist owned practices, but it is a roadblock to our 2020 Vision of being an autonomous profession. When one must rely upon financial incentives to your referring physicians, we have lost sight of that vision. When we discussed this in 2002, I asked if perhaps we should meet with the medical society- to which our board replied "Why not?" Unfortunately, the New Hampshire Medical Society does not see physician ownership of referral services in the same light that we at APTA do. We will continue to work on this issue in the months to come. Perhaps one day we will realize our dream of legislation in this area to finally ban the issue of referral for profit- WHY NOT?

I can't help but close my column with a few thoughts. As most of us sit in our clinics/ hospitals/ nursing homes/ rehabs and wonder "Why"- why can't Medicare and Congress understand? Why does insurance only cover 60 days of treatment? Why can't my patient get authorization for the wheelchair he so desperately needs through medicaid? Sit back, and dare to dream... "Why not?" Think about volunteering for a committee- helping out a few hours per month to lend a hand to those who are passionately leading our profession forward and trying to make a change for the better through the work of the New Hampshire American Physical Therapy Association. It is only through their leadership, idealism, courage, and determination, that we can hope to rise above the "Why" and begin to dream "Why not?" Believe me, if I can do it- anybody can. Join me in supporting our new president and helping APTA to grow and to meet the challenges our profession will face as we move toward Vision 2020!

**NH APTA
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PRESIDENT <i>Allied Health</i>	<i>Susan CuthbertsonAbis, PT</i> 13 Waterview Drive Amherst, NH 03031 susan.abis@prodigy.net	978/649-2592 w 603/673-6118 h 978/649-4620 Fax
VICE PRESIDENT <i>Gov't Affairs Membership</i>	<i>Charles S. Evans, MPT</i> 26 Lamprey Lane Lee, NH 03824 Charles.S.Evans@Hitchcock.org	659-1983 h 629-1822 Fax
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SECRETARY <i>Academic Relations Nominating</i>	<i>Patricia Larkin-Upton, PT MS</i> 201 Paquette Ave Manchester, NH 03104 plupton@attbi.com	669-2341 H 771-4351 pager
CHIEF DELEGATE <i>Bylaws Federal Affairs</i>	<i>Marc M. Lacroix, PT, MBA, NHA</i> Genesis ElderCare 200 Brookstone Square Andover, MA 01810 malacroix@aol.com	978/247-5142 w 978/474-7526 Fax 225-2177 h
DIRECTOR <i>Continuing Education Reimbursement</i>	<i>Carla Bickford, PT</i> 230 White Oak Road Ctr Barnstead, NH 03225 c.bickford@fmhospital.com	335-8435 w
DIRECTOR <i>Public Relations Research/Practice</i>	<i>Joshua D. Brooks, MPT</i> 21 Brigham Street Laconia, NH 03246 josar@metrocast.net	528-6669 h 524-2852 w
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DIRECTOR <i>Research/Practice</i>	<i>Beth Swanson, PT MS</i> PO Box 377 New London NH 03257 swansonb@FPC.edu	927-4072 h 389-0209 w
DIRECTOR	<i>Judy H. Thackaberry, MPT</i> 93 Ryder Corner Road Sunapee, NH 03782 Judy.Thackaberry@newlondonhospital.com	763-4504 w 526-5214 Fax
PTA LIAISON <i>PTA SJG Academic Relations</i>	<i>Stacy Lashell Thrall, PTA</i> 9 Crosby Lane Londonderry, NH 03053 stacy_thrall@hotmail.com	893-2900 x720 w
NOMINATING COMMITTEE	<i>Jennifer L. Corbeil, PT, MHA</i> <i>Mary Blevens, PT</i> <i>Denise N. White, PT</i> Allied Health Board	207/438-9182 h 471-0648 h 465-7799 h 603/271-8389

NEWSLETTER

Editor Greg Woodsum, PT 603/663-8182 w gwoodsum@comcast.net	Publisher James H. Bradley, APR 603/627-7970; 627-3970 Fax Office@nhapta.org
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SCHEDULE

February	Legislative Bulletin / Calendar of Events Nominations Call / Caucus Reminder / Academic Update Benefits of Membership (Circulation: All PT/PTAs in NH)
August	Reports: Caucus / National / HOD / Legislative
December	Election Results / Annual Meeting Report

Reimbursement Chair Forum

Kathleen Hanlon, PT CHT

I recently had the opportunity to attend the National APTA Reimbursement Chair Forum, where 47 representative out of the fifty states were present to hear updated information and network with other PT chairs and experts from the national government affairs and reimbursement teams.

Helene Fearon, PT spoke on the first day in regards to coding and reimbursement and understanding Medicare. She was such a dynamic speaker with an effective way of bringing what could be a dry topic to life with relevant and clear examples. Although she spoke mainly of Medicare, this information is relevant and parallel to private insurers. I learned the importance of correct ICD-9 coding as well as the use of modifiers to prevent bundling to maximize reimbursement on PT billing. Discussion on the use and definitions of the group therapy code, the new wound care codes and the use of the evaluation and reevaluation codes combined with treatment on the same date of service were very helpful.

Other speakers addressed fraud and abuse, HIPAA updates and peer review with clear guideline of adequate documentation to ensure appropriate reimbursement. Direct access was discussed to assess if payment is occurring now that the law has changed in most states. The need for education was reviewed on many levels:

1. Education to payors in regards to the value of PT in the current market where fees/visits are being reduced;
2. Education to therapist in contract decisions where contracts must adequately cover costs to cover services;
3. Education to employers when buying products for company healthcare plans to look at the PT component and the impact it will have on employees when these benefits are reduced;
4. Education to our congressional leaders in regards to the Medicare cap and proposed reductions.

Many educational materials are available by National along with the support of a highly experienced staff. NH needs to utilize these valuable resources as well as pool our own through committee involvement by members from multiple setting sites.

A strong reimbursement committee can be very effective in obtaining fair PT contracts in all clinical settings and ensuring the consumer of adequate PT visits necessary for treatment. Consider joining the reimbursement committee and getting involved on the most important issues impacting our profession.



American Physical Therapy Association
New Hampshire Chapter

Volunteers Honored

Retiring board members, and officers moving on to new responsibilities were among the dozen Chapter members recognized for outstanding contributions to the New Hampshire Chapter, and presented with a gift by President Susan Abis.

Marc Lacroix was recognized for his years as Chief Delegate and his readiness to serve as President.

Charles S. Evans, retiring Vice President and Beth Swanson, retiring board member were recognized for their service to the Chapter.

Carla Bickford, retiring board member, and liaison to the Continuing Education and the Reimbursement committees was honored for her service, and for her role in arranging the Chapter's first Bi-State meeting.

Jennifer Corbeil, retiring chair of the Nominations Committee was recognized for her special efforts both last year and in 2003.

Barbara Collins, long time chair of the Bylaws committee, was recognized for unsung efforts over long time spans to keep the Chapter's Bylaws in tune with the national vision and the local realities.

Kathy Hanlon was recognized for her success with the Reimbursement committee's efforts to communicate with third party payors.

Stacy Thrall, New Hampshire's RBNA delegate, was honored for her efforts in organizing the PTA/SIG.

Janet Lehoullier and Judy Zeichner, co-chairs of the Continuing Education Committee, were recognized for their important contributions to the NH-Vt Planning Committee for the Bi-State Conference.

Jane Walter Ventzke, who once again leads NH's only Physical Therapy Masters Program at Franklin Pierce College, was recognized for outstanding service to the field of Physical Therapy.



PODS & NIFTI Applications Online

Guidelines and application forms for the Doctoral Opportunities for Clinicians and Scholars (DOCS) Program Promotion of Doctoral Studies (PODS) scholarships and New Investigator Fellowship Training Initiative (NIFTI) fellowship are now available on line at http://www.apta.org/foundation/applications_online.

Also available is an RFP for a \$40,000 research grant on the effectiveness of hot tub use and low back pain that is available to all physical therapist researchers. The deadline for receipt of applications is **January 15, 2004**. Direct questions to Lucy Dickson, Scientific Program Administrator, at lucydickson@apta.org.

\$1,000 Scholarship Winner

A physical therapy student at Massachusetts General Hospital's Institute of Health Professions has won the \$1,000 Mary Stanton Scholarship for 2004, provided by the New Hampshire Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association, and honoring a NH pioneer in the field.

Beth Rod Swanson of Chester, NH, was presented with the scholarship at the annual meeting of the NH Chapter APTA on November 1 at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, according to Laurie Clute, PT, MS, the Chapter's Scholarship chair.

A dedicated student, with a GPA of 3.86, Beth looks forward to graduating this spring and starting to practice physical therapy.

PTA Special Interest Group

Stacy L. Thrall, PTA

New Hampshire Physical Therapist Assistants continue to celebrate 30 years of the PTA within the American Physical Therapy Association. On October 16, 2003 NHAPTA held an unprecedented informational meeting for the development of an affiliate special interest group. The meeting was attended by seven Assistants, the Chapter President, Chief Delegate, Treasurer and Secretary. In addition, three other PTAs expressed interest in attending future meetings.

The topics that were discussed included highlights from this year's RBNA meeting as well as the annual House of Delegates. Specifically, we discussed membership, leadership development, continuing education and the 2004 National Assembly Goals. The results of the RC 40-01 Task Force were shared, along with a brief summary on the development of an Advanced Recognition Task Force.

Attendees were invited to openly discuss the concerns and issues that are affecting the Physical Therapist Assistant in our state. Their issues are consistent with the nationwide consensus of Assistants and included: the newly implemented co-signature policy, professional courtesy, joint mobilization/wounds and general clinical issues.

Upon adjourning, the group set an additional meeting date of December 4, 2004 in Laconia, NH.

On behalf of the NHAPTA and the National Assembly, I would like to personally thank all that attended. I look forward to continuing our dialogue.

Volunteers Wanted!!

We're looking for a couple good PTs or PTAs to volunteer at the Good Neighbor Health Clinic (GNHC) in White River Junction. The GNHC has been in existence for more than ten years, and is one of ten free clinics in Vermont with the purpose of meeting the health needs of underinsured and uninsured citizens of the region. Up until last fall, the GNHC worked out of a local parsonage house. The old Gates Memorial Library in downtown White River Junction was purchased and renovated as the beautiful new home for the clinic. Local doctors, nurses, medical students, an acupuncturist, a massage therapist and dentists offer free services.

For the past two years, Shelia Cardamone and I have offered PT services on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 3-6 pm. Patients tend to have typical musculoskeletal conditions seen in any out-patient clinic. We have ultrasound, rice packs (for superficial heat), a therapy ball and ice cups for ice massage. Most of the interventions include manual therapy and a lot of patient education. Paperwork includes only the chart documentation... no insurance forms to fill out! No Medicare cap!

We are looking for other PTs or PTAs in the Connecticut River Valley who are interested in volunteering on a Monday or Wednesday once or twice a month. A Vermont PT/PTA license is required. Liability insurance is recommended. Nancy Wood is the director of volunteers. She can be reached at (802) 295-1868. If you have questions about the clinic or the PT services, give either of us a call: Shelia Cardamone, PT (603) 542-7744 extension 2518, or me, Laurie Clute, PT at (603) 542-7744 extension 2554.

NH APTA Election Results

The Election of Board and Officers took place at the annual meeting, November 1, held at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH, as part of a joint NH-Vt Educational program. The following will serve two year terms, unless noted.

The president-elect is Marc M. Lacroix, of Concord, VP, Rehab Services, Genesis ElderCare.

Vice President will be Kristine Terrio, of Concord, VP, Rehab Services, Concord Hospital.

Susan Abis, of Amherst, owner of Tyngsborough PT, was elected Chief Delegate.

Beth Swanson, of New London, owner of Therapy Works, Inc was elected Delegate, a one year term.

Elected to the Board of Directors were: Janice Greenyer, of Peterborough, VP Planning & Services, Monadnock Community Hospital; and Tambi Rondinone, of Goffstown, employed by VNA of Southern NH/Manchester.

Pamela Nation, of Concord, a Neural PT at HealthSouth Rehab Hospital in Concord was elected to a three year term on the Nominating Committee.

Dear Marc:

I am a member of NHAPTA.

I want to make a difference and will volunteer at least one hour/month on the following Committees:

(check one or more, number your first choice "1")

Academic Relations Government Affairs
 Finance & Fund Raising Membership
 Bylaws Nominating
 Continuing Education Public Relations
 Ethics, QA, Risk Mgmt. Reimbursement
 Research/Program Scholarship
 Allied Health Professionals

I am not ready to volunteer at this time but want to learn more about Committee or Board of Director work. (Please be specific about topic:)

I may be able to help on time-limited jobs.

Maybe next year.

Name: _____

Home Town: _____

Employment & title: _____

Tel. # work: _____

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New Hampshire Chapter

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