

House of Delegates Update

This year's APTA House of Delegates was held from June 14th through June 16th in Boston Massachusetts just prior to APTA National Convention. Every five years the House of Delegates considers by-law changes. This year several motions were proposed to limit terms of APTA officers, to define terms for APTA officers, and to define qualifications of APTA officers. The House suspended the rules allowing open discussion of this set of by-law changes. After general discussion that did not support the proposed changes, each of these motions was withdrawn before being introduced.

The first motion heard was to give PTA members a full vote at the component level. This motion is also a by-law change that requires 2/3 vote in the affirmative for it to pass. Although there was much support in the house, the motion did not receive a 2/3 majority therefore, was defeated.

An unofficial summary of other motions adopted by the House follows:

- States that the use of Physical Agents/Modalities in the absence of other interventions or the use of multiple PA/M with similar physiologic effects should not be considered physical therapy or medically necessary, without documentation that justifies their use.
- Affirms that the physical therapist of record is responsible for patient/client management and is accountable for the coordination, continuation, and progression of the plan of care.
- Reinforces that the physical therapist of record is responsible for “hand-off” communication.
- Demonstrates APTA support for an expedited licensure process for physical therapists with an unrestricted license in any US jurisdiction to practice in another US jurisdiction in order to participate in an educational opportunity, such as fellowships and residencies.
- States that the requirement for reports to the House of Delegates, as specified in RC 36B-01 Financing Clinical Education, be discontinued. [This does not change APTA’s continuing efforts related to policy initiatives regarding clinical education.]
- Directs APTA to pursue strategic and collaborative relationships with other organizations that represent primary care providers with annual reports to the House related to these initiatives.
- Establishes the following principles to promote best practices in business and professional relationships and arrangements in connection with physical therapist practice:
 - Autonomy: Physical Therapists shall have control over all clinical decisions relating to physical therapy.
 - Integrity: Business relationships shall be free of avoidable conflicts of interest and comply with all American Physical Therapy Association positions, standards, guidelines, policies, and procedures.
 - Equity: Physical therapist ownership should be proportional to investment and shared risk.
 - Incentive: Physical Therapists should be compensated based on the value of their services, which may be measured through components such as

- quantity, quality, and complexity.
- Affirms that physical therapists and physical therapist assistants have an ethical obligation to respect the rights and dignities of all individuals, particularly those of the vulnerable and to provide care consistent with APTA core values.
 - To support this obligation, APTA shall promote the WCPT's Declaration of Principle Against Torture*
*<http://www.wcpt.org/node/29598>
 - Directs APTA to develop resources to guide members in the provision of or support of pro bono physical therapy services.
 - Directs APTA to seek partnerships and collaborations with various stakeholders to develop evidence-based physical activity recommendations, public relations tools, and policy and legislative initiatives that support the role of the physical therapist in preventing and alleviating childhood obesity.
 - Directs APTA to develop and implement a plan to achieve full title and term protection for physical therapy, physiotherapy, and similar terms in all US jurisdictions with an interim report to the House in 2011 and a final report in 2012.
 - Provides financial support for candidates for national office to attend either Combined Sections Meeting or an APTA Board of Directors meeting in the year in which they are candidates.
 - Guidelines for financial support of these activities are in compliance with APTA financial policies.
 - Directs APTA to investigate opportunities to enhance awareness of, promotion of, and participation in component Special Interest Groups and Chapter Political Action Committees with a report due to the 2011 House of Delegates.

For further information and specifics, please reference the APTA webpage for full details.

Participating in the House of Delegates as the Federal Section Delegate was a new and interesting experience! I look forward to 2011 HOD and hope to be better prepared to represent our very diverse Federal Section. We do have room for an alternate delegate on the roster so if you are interested in getting a taste of what goes on in preparation for the HOD at APTA 2011, let me know!