

Open Letter for ArPTA members:

HAPPY NEW YEAR! As you may have heard, Rob Jordan has stepped down as President of the ArPTA in order to be able to devote himself to his new duties on the State Board of PT Practice for Arkansas. As previous Vice President, I was appointed President for the remainder of Rob's term (through 2009). Since I have been here in Arkansas and serving our Association, I have been observing and listening as much as I can to see why there seems to be such a great disconnect between this Association and the licensees of our fair State. To start the new year, I thought it would be appropriate to talk about goals and objectives for the new year.

I have seen all volunteer, representative organizations take quite a hit in membership over the past decade, and the American Physical Therapy Association and the Arkansas Chapter were no exception. The real question should be: "Why do some organizations maintain strong membership connections while others are not able to do so?" I believe the answer is in the words "service" and "worth". People do not want to join an organization where they are not fully "served" in meeting their needs as a person and as a professional. They will not spend money to join an organization where they see no real "worth" in their membership. This is a simple concept, but there is no simple solution. We definitely need to find a way to allow the ArPTA to meet the needs of licensed PTs and PTAs in our state and to create a desire of these licensees to want to pay money to be part of this organization. Through the help of the Board of ArPTA we are going to set an aggressive agenda over the next year or two and see if we can re-connect to the licensees in Arkansas and the members of our Association.

We are having a strategic planning session January 10, 2009 to finalize quite a few plans and directions but I can give you some insight from what we plan on accomplishing. We plan to aggressively pursue continuing education opportunities for physical therapists in all regions of our State. We are already planning continuing education activities in the NW and NE sections of our State and will plan on joining with RehabNet in the fall for a joint meeting of our organizations. We are planning on being very active in the legislative arena this winter and spring in modernizing our practice act. We will be reforming and reinvigorating our reimbursement committee and then actively pursue arrangements with third party payers (BCBS, United, and others) and then present information to members on ways to improve fiscal soundness to their practices. We are updating our website to reflect recent and constantly changing rehabilitation information and make it monetarily self-sustaining through the sale of advertisement. We will be doing an extensive revamping of our communication system to allow us to pass more information to more members more quickly. Finally, we will be trying to reassure members that they can perform manual therapy without fear of legal challenge since the enacted sweeping changes made through legislation during the last two sessions.

We hope to see all of you renew or join membership in ArPTA in the next year. We can't do this without members. Please let us know your needs and your concerns and we will make every attempt to meet those needs and answer those concerns. I am glad to be in this new role and am excited about the opportunities for growth of ArPTA within Arkansas.

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