

President's Message  
March 1, 2009

This has been a busy month here in Arkansas with the ArPTA and also has been busy through APTA at the National level. I would like every member to be able to keep up with this activity and will try to bring everyone up to date through this March letter. Remember to keep abreast of all the legislative activity in this State during this session through the Arkansas Legislative web page at:

<http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2009/R/Pages/Home.aspx>

On the National scene, the APTA has been able to reintroduce the Medicare Patient Access to Physical Therapists Act (HR 1552/S. 932) and the lead sponsors for both of these bills in the House and in the Senate are Arkansas legislators. Each year we have been gaining additional co-sponsors and are now nearing the time when these bills will have enough momentum to make it out of committee and make it to the floor of both the House and the Senate. Though our legislators here in Arkansas are very supportive, we still have been unable to influence Senator Pryor on the Direct Access legislation and would appreciate continued presence in his mailboxes and e-mails on the importance of this issue to you and your patients.

We just returned from Las Vegas, NV where we attended the Combined Sections Meeting with over 8500 attendees (a new record attendance). I spent considerable time talking with the Manual Therapy SIG of the Orthopedic Section and assuring them of the inroads and protections we have in Arkansas for spinal manual therapy and they are willing to no longer list Arkansas as a problem State for spinal manual therapy.

Secondly, the APTA has been working hard with a marketing firm over the past three years and a roll-out of the most significant campaign and "branding effort" ever attempted by APTA happened at CSM. After numerous surveys to members, physician and related health care providers, and patients, a new direction and common effort has been developed for physical therapy and the APTA. The new "Brand" is as follows:

***MOVE FORWARD: Physical Therapy brings motion to life!***

You will see a large campaign generated around this message over the next year and hopefully this will resonate in developing a common theme for patients and other health care providers to grasp and understand.

Back here in our State, we are now in the middle of our legislative session. This session is important to us as physical therapy providers, as the Arkansas State Board of Physical Therapy (Licensure) is introducing changes to our Practice Act in order to help insure protection of the public and our profession. The bill will be introduced in the legislature this week and we will need the support of all of you for passage. Remember, this bill is not being brought by the ArPTA, but we are still strongly in favor of the changes in language and the protection this will bring the public and our profession. In the process of defending our profession from other entities, I have met with the Arkansas Medical Society on a bill they are presenting and the Arkansas State Board of Massage Therapists on a couple of bills being presented that affect this Board.

The Arkansas Medical Society wanted to introduce language into the physical therapy practice bill that would protect them and their right to bill for PT evaluation CPT-4 codes. Their language was obtrusive and Seth Coulter and the ArPTA worked hard to reach compromise on their request and then gain their support for the PT bill being introduced.

The massage therapy bills presented were SB 89 which would have added words like: "assessment, injury, mobilization, and exercise through range of motion" to the Massage Therapy Practice Act. After meeting with their representative, we have been assured this language will change or we have promised to defeat this bill and support another bill presented on the House side. HB 1162 would disband the Board of Massage Therapy and move them under the Department of Health. If the language changes, as expected, we will be neutral on both bills. Keep checking your messages to see how these actions are progressing through this Session and how you can help.

Finally, we have a meeting planned with BSBS of Arkansas on some reimbursement issues affecting home health and timely evaluation of claims in this next month. The ArPTA will be spending a lot of time this year on getting back into proactive reimbursement strategies and discussions with third party payers in all realms of our services. If you are interested in helping with this activity, or you have other items you wish to address in reimbursement, please drop me an e-mail and I promise to follow up with you.

We have finalized our Spring Meeting agenda and you will be notified this week on agenda and location. The Fall Meeting planning is also well along and you will be notified of the dates and agenda of this activity within the next two months. The Spring Meeting will be held at the Comfort Suites in Little Rock on April 17-18, 2009. The evening of April 17 will be a research presentation and PAC Fundraising event. Some of this will be held at Crush Wine and Cheese Bar and should be loads of fun. Plan on attending with friends and significant others. Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> will be continuing education and has a great course on Diagnostic Imaging. Stanley Paris has agreed to come back to Arkansas and present a manual therapy course and we are trying to coordinate this with our fall meeting. More on this will be coming soon.

Thank you for all of your support over the past three months. I will continue to try to be available to any person or organization needing information or response from the APTA or the ArPTA. Remember, you are welcome to contact me at [sforbush@uca.edu](mailto:sforbush@uca.edu) or through my cell phone at 501-366-0714.

Respectfully submitted,

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