**President’s Message #3  3/30/2022**
This is my third and final message to our CSMA members. Our Annual Meeting will be on Saturday, April 23 beginning at 9:00 am and continuing until we complete all our business.  I hope that many of you will join us to find out more about your organization, protocols set in place for leadership roles and the future of CSMA.  We can all learn together and more help spreads the workload.

First of all, this officer would like to thank the members of CSMA for their vote of confidence in allowing me to lead this Society, once again, for the past year.  It has been a pleasure to do so in spite of the pandemic and the difficulties it caused.  Your committee chairs, liaison, and officers have worked very hard to represent you in California and at AAMA.  We thank each of our committee chairs and members of those committees for extending themselves and working toward the betterment of this Society. We will continue as needed to stabilize the Society toward a better future
As has been stated many times before, our lives have been turned upside down during this pandemic and this may still not be over.  There is a new variant within our midst so please be extra careful until we know the characteristics and the dangers of this variant.  Some of our members have lost loved ones and friends, others have come down with COVID, still others have questioned the efficacy of the vaccine and there are still others questioning the long term effects on our young ones.  These are not just questions and situations but “REAL” situations facing our Society. This has created an atmosphere of division in our lives, shut downs and mandates but we are a resilient nation and organization so it is hoped that we are on our way out of these shutdowns and can learn to live with these variants in our society and continue open dialogue on all topics openly and freely.  CSMA sends condolences to our members who have lost a loved one or friend(s).

During all of this, life goes on and CSMA continued its responsibilities to represent the membership and build new programs within this atmosphere.  This year, we have developed virtual CEUs so our members can obtain their needed credits online.  We are fortunate to be able to offer these CEUs as a benefit for this last fiscal year free of charge.  We do not know if this program will continue but that will be based on the voting members attending our Annual Meeting.  The membership at the meeting will decide whether to continue these sessions either with a fee or free or go back to in-person meetings or develop a hybrid annual meeting.  Many questions need to be answered. CSMA is using a virtual platform to discuss issues among its committees and Executive Committee.  It has become an easier way to have open discussion without so many emails back and forth.  Those emails are still necessary but have reduced its use and added another mode of communication.  Our Marketing team has develop banners that can now be put up at meetings to identify and brand our organization.  Public Policy has monitored any challenges to our credential in California.  Our CSMA Certification Committee has sent emails to all our newly certified CMA (AAMA) s and the Sunshine Committee has recognized past presidents we have lost and their contributions to our existence.

One policy we would like to emphasize is your recertification.  As you know, we must recertify every 5 years to be current and use our credential.  Because we have had a few issues, we want to be sure that our members understand the policy of the CB on recertification by the continuing education method.  You may recertify by retaking the exam or taking 60 units in specific categories to recertify.  The one issue you need to be aware of is that once your credential has expired, you have a 90 day grace period to recertify which is not extendable.  Once this grace period ends, even by one day, you must retake the examination to continue to use your CMA (AAMA).  The notification that your credential is expiring is sent at least 6 months before your credential expires.  Do not allow your renewal date to lapse.

Another policy was passed by the Certifying Board (CB) where retired CMA (AAMA)s may use the credential for ceremonial purposes only.  The CB has approved this policy with a one-time fee to use the credential by retirees.  If you fall within this category, you may contact the Certification Department to find out more about this policy.

Fiscally, CSMA is strong and has funds to sustain this organization; however, we do need more participation by our membership.  A handful of committed and dedicated members keep our Society operating but we are now asking more members to help with the work load.  We want to try to develop new programs but cannot do so because of the lack of participation.  We have some very innovative members who can suggest new programs for us to implement but are held up because we need more member participation.  This will be discussed at our annual meeting so we are giving you a “head start” to think of ways you might be able to help.  We are asking members to register for the Annual Meeting so we know who is able to vote on the issues.  We will be sending out the link over several times before our meeting so you have immediate access to it but it will also be posted to our website.

The next AAMA 66th Annual Conference will be held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina with the following Annual Conference in 2023 in Lake Buena Vista, Florida.  AAMA is going back to Lake Buena Vista because we had to cancel the conference to be held there due to the pandemic.  If you would like to be a delegate from CSMA, look in your bylaws for the qualification and “throw your hat” into the ring to run for this office if you meet the qualifications and can get off work.

AAMA is looking for interviews with medical assistants to spotlight Medical Assistants Week (MAR).  AAMA sent out an email blast so take a look if you have something to share with your members. CSMA’s relationship with AAMA has been strong.  Use this week to promote your profession.  Hopefully, our employer will also recognize medical assistants employed by them.
As president, I have had many questions on legal issues and clarification of new policies both in the association and with the public sector.  We are fortunate to have a CEO dedicated both to the profession and members who is so willing to explain and clarify these issues.  I am not a “legal beagle” so having a resource to email or a telephone call away has been so helpful so we have accurate, and factual information.  We are fortunate to have a CEO who is well recognized in the medical assisting profession as well as in many aspects of healthcare.  He has opened the opportunities for medical assisting and speaking about the competency of our credentialed medical assistants.  He has worked with CAAHEP in helping to establish the profession and standards of training, worked with NCCA to obtain accreditation with the CB, and has been open to me on issues facing CSMA.  Although our CEO will be around for a few more years, I wanted to recognize him for all the contributions he has made to our profession.  We have not always agreed on each topic but we respect one another to value each other’s opinions.  As many of you know, Don Balasa recognizes its members and leaders.  Although my time with AAMA may be limited now, my friendship and respect for our members and Don Balasa is of the highest quality.  Mr. Balasa has always kept me on the “straight and narrow” and follow legal tenets.  This is what I will miss as I begin to look toward a different future.  I have known Don and his family for a long time and
cherish those memories. This is the special benefits of being a part of the AAMA family.  This is not a good-bye for him as he will be with us at AAMA for a few more years but it is the direction I am heading towards.  My future will depend on the stability of CSMA.
We look to strength, decisiveness and an openness for discussion by all with our membership about issues within California and CSMA.   See you in April.

My best to all our members.  You are the reason I am willing to do what I do for CSMA.  You are my CSMA family.
Joyce Nakano, CMA (AAMA)
CSMA 2021-2022 President