AAMA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

SEPTEMBER 14-17, 2018

FIRST ALTERNATE DELEGATE/FIRST TIME ATTENDEE

This delegate is thankful for the opportunity to represent our California Society of Medical Assistants at the AAMA National Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah as a First Alternate Delegate and First Time Attendee. Thanks to the expertise of the CSMA delegation an otherwise overwhelming first experience was a pleasant, calm, and amazing learning experience. This delegate attended First-Timers and Students Reception, Board of Trustees, Endowment Meetings, How to Survive a Deposition, CMA (AAMA) Knowledge Bowl, Welcome and Awards Celebration, Neurological Disorders, House of Delegates (HOD) Delegate/Alternate Orientation, Worker’s Compensation Fraud, Wound Care, Eating Disorders, House of Delegates Convenes, Meet the Candidates, Reports, Bylaws, Resolutions, House of Delegates Reconvenes, Pharmacology Review, Opioids, and Presidents Luncheon.

At the First-Timers and Students Reception this delegate learned more about the organization and her fellow brothers and sisters who have paved a path for us to continue our journey learning and growing. Sometimes when we go somewhere we find that we are there for a different purpose than what we intended. In this delegate’s case this is exactly what happened. This delegate thought she was there to network and meet others including first timers instead found herself a solo first timer as attendees dispersed after a short period. A few first-time attendees came a little late which included a student and a medical assistant who were not CMA (AAMA).

As this delegate approached the week of traveling to the conference a boulder landed on Monday as a nice bug decided to take residency in her body. By Wednesday the contagious stuff had dissipated, however, this delegate chose to wear a mask as an added precaution to keep the bug from visiting her brothers and sisters. In one of this delegate’s pictures with old and new friends, she can be seen with her mask on. For this delegate it was not about what others thought of her wearing the blue mask but keeping herself and others protected dressing professionally and walking the talk of what we talk (educate others). This delegate anticipated wearing the scary blue mask others would avoid getting too close, however to this delegate’s surprise her sisters and brothers of AAMA and CSMA welcomed her with open arms and warm hearts, many continued to check in with her throughout the conference and not only share kind words but wrap their caring and loving arms around her. The power of healing hugs is amazing! This delegate experienced that communication can also be powerful using eyes as well as the tools of the cell phone app created for the conference. This delegate continued communication and meeting up with her new contacts throughout the conference. One of this delegate’s new friend lived in Utah and was gracious enough to give tips about where to find gluten-free eats and guided us to the coffee shop and local attractions.

To counteract the Utah dry climate, this delegate continued to drink tons and tons of water and Gatorade to stay hydrated. This delegate was mentally stimulated from sessions and learning about the house of delegates and their process and physically stimulated walking around viewing the sights, learning about Utah history, and walking from session to session throughout the entire conference. This delegate paced herself and this delegate’s peers continued to support her self-care. Their patience and understanding helped this delegate attain her and her state’s society goals of her participation at the 2018 AAMA National Conference serving as an alternate delegate. The delegate’s first time at AAMA National Conference 2018 was a memorable one that will stay with her forever and has implanted a special mark in this delegate’s heart. This delegate’s journey with the medical field has been both a challenging and rewarding adventure filled with all kinds of emotions and continued to be as this delegate began her journey with AAMA National Conference.

As the conference went on this delegate’s allergies to certain essential oils became induced and she developed an itchy rash all over as well as difficulty breathing. This served as a very prominent reminder for herself to take caution in lotions, hair and body products that she uses to ensure they do not affect others. This also includes mouth washes and things eaten. This delegate’s experience has inspired her to caution others and hope to raise awareness that though essential oils can be beneficial for many, they can also be harmful to others. This delegate has heard many times from essential oil reps that the oils are pure and you can’t be allergic to them. When this delegate notifies them she is allergic to certain oils they usually decide to challenge the theory and “discretely” use the oil in some way. This delegate’s words turn to objective signs as she breaks out in an itchy rash and in some cases have difficulty breathing. Raising awareness is important to this delegate as she is confident she is not alone and others experience similar symptoms as well as other types of symptoms. Please use this as a reference to consider as we care for others and we have the heart to help and protect others. Some people experience the severe reaction as this delegate and others take on the form of developing migraines to the extent of losing vision, whereas others may have minor symptoms hidden under clothing, etc.

Throughout the conference this delegate heard many inspiring and empowering speeches and talks in all the different sessions as well as “Meet the Candidates”. One of the quotes from a candidate that resonate with this delegate are “Like a candle when you see someone’s flame is dim and flickering, be the fan that blows with them, reigniting them as the flame rises remind them they are not alone. We the AAMA are with them”.

Lisa Lee’s speech sharing about her heroes was powerful and like her love for Disney, this delegate too have a love for Disney with Tiana being this delegate’s favorite and Mulan next. Seeing and hearing Lisa Lee’s daughter speak, and sing reminded this delegate of her experience performing CPR on her dad and reminding this delegate why she does what she does. In February 2016 this delegate was faced with challenge of client injuring her and redirecting her path from becoming a paramedic to uniting her passion with her abilities and being a Medical Assistant. This delegate posted a picture on the 62nd AAMA app a picture that she had taken at the conference. One of the questions on the app was to show why you were there. Sometimes we go somewhere for one reason and end up there for a completely different reason. This delegate had been dreaming of attending the national conference for several years and had planned to attend 2017, however a new job prevented her from being able to take off the amount of time needed for the conference. Reflecting on this she related this to the picture she took. This delegate was a seed planted in the soil and her mentors, friends, family, people around watered her soil helping her sprout. In 2017, this delegate like the plant had one purple vine growing and needed just a little more water to sprout her other green vine. For this delegate the purple represents the bumps and bruises endured along her journey leading to the green vine representing the lessons she has learned giving her green light to move forward in which one day her vines will intertwine uniting her with her full potential.

The last flight home was delayed due to a mechanical problem with the door seal of plane. The airline was unable to find a different route till the next afternoon. The airline accommodated with a hotel room and voucher to fly again with a year expiration. This delay gave an opportunity to slow down, rest, and reflect. Inspired, the words began to flow. The report was almost completed on the airplane when there was a glitch and the entire report with exception to the first six lines disappeared. As frustration set in this delegate attempted to endure this challenge and rewrite. A few weeks later the report was recovered with IT magic.

Life threw a few more curve balls as this delegate’s first grandchild was born a week early with a few minor complications. After adapting to the new Grandma role, a coworker unexpectedly had to take emergency leave immediately following the first day back to work causing several back to back double shifts leading to exhaustion, immune system run down and bedridden for approximately four days. Ready to throw in the towel and give up on being able to complete this report, this delegate followed Princess Tiana’s reminder of hard work and determination leads to reaching dreams. Deadlines are important and in our line of work depending on where we are assisting it could mean life or death. In EMT training, this delegate’s mentor played many roles including being the paramedic that saved her dad, an instructor and program director. His words of wisdom to “Trust the process.” and “Adapt and overcome.” have stayed with this delegate and helped overcome obstacles over the years. Trusting the process may be uncomfortable and challenging, however we cannot rush through. It is important to adapt and overcome as there are going to be unforeseen things in life, no matter the situation and to be successful we must adapt to the change and overcome the challenge.

This delegate’s experience as an Alternate Delegate and First Time Attendee at AAMA National Conference reignited the flame inside of her, her passion, and reminded this delegate to focus on abilities not the disability. This delegate made new friends and is excited to stay in contact and grow together and looks forward to getting more involved with this organization. The AAMA National Conference in this delegate’s experience is more than networking, refreshing, and staying up to date; this conference provides an opportunity to look deep within, learn about ourselves, and learn about history and culture of different states while be inspired. This delegate with much gratitude thanks CSMA for electing and sharing this amazing opportunity with her. It has been a pleasure and honor to serve as a representative of CSMA at the 2018 AAMA National Conference.

Cynthia Pilgrim, CMA(AAMA)

First Alternate Delegate/First Time Attendee