AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS

61st Annual Conference

Third Delegate’s Report

 Hilton Netherland’s Hotel and Conference Center

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As a first-time attendee, this delegate was a little intimidated at first, but once this delegate got warm to the crowd, he settled into the mood of the conference. He met several of the Delegates from the other state chapters and quickly identified with peers that had been to prior national conferences. They quickly formed a bond and decided to tour the four-star hotel in which we were staying. They went into one of the conference rooms called “the Hall of Mirrors”, and it was breathtakingly beautiful, with art deco frieze and a lot of marble. President Kennedy and the First Lady were in this room in the 60’s for a banquet. It felt like the thermostat was broken, and all present on the tour quickly put on jackets. Throughout the conference, all attendees got to experience what all perceived as “the coldest room in the hotel”.

 The First Timers Reception was probably the strongest ice breaker for him. Going to nationals for the first time was a bit intimidating at first. Meeting other peers who were also there for the first time made it easier for him to let go of the angst. With Immediate Past President Paula Purdy, CMA (AAMA) in the room, the mood was light and fun, and Paula made everyone very comfortable. We were introduced to the Board of Trustees members Monica Case, CMA (AAMA), Mary Gambrell, CMA (AAMA), Patty Licurs, CMA (AAMA), Deborah Novak, CMA (AAMA), Virginia Thomas, CMA (AAMA), and Aimee Wicker, CMA (AAMA), PCMH CCE. Some of the topics discussed during this session were the differences between CMA certification -vs- CMA (AAMA) certification, RMA certification and the confusion that exists with employers as it relates to these different certificates. He was shocked to learn the depth and breadth of ignorance and lack of understanding in the field of medicine and allied health care as it relates to the Medical Assistant profession. Discussion then covered the lack of participation of currently practicing Medical Assistants and recent graduates of allied health programs, especially those that fall under programs governed by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education (CAAHEP) and the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) programs. This provided a segway to the discussion of employer ignorance of the CMA (AAMA) credential and its true value in the field of allied health care, as well as the seemingly passé attitudes of practicing Medical Assistants and new graduates alike. He agrees that one of the most critical roles of the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) is to first *educate* employers about the AAMA and its certification protocols, and engage in a very broad and comprehensive recruitment campaign targeting new graduates to join our ranks and gain “gold standard” Medical Assistant credentials.

 The Board of Trustees meeting was chaired by current AAMA President Julie Flatten, CMA (AAMA), RN, EMT. Also present were Donald J. Balasa, JD, MBA, Executive Director and Legal Counsel, AAMA Vice-President and incoming AAMA President Lisa Lee, CMA (AAMA), Immediate Past President Paula Purdy, CMA (AAMA), Secretary - Treasurer Sue Hawes, CMA (AAMA), MBA, RHIT, FACMPE, Speaker of the House Debby Houston, CMA (AAMA), CPC, Vice Speaker of the House K. Minchella, CMA (AAMA), PhD, Trustee Monica Case, CMA (AAMA), Trustee Mary Gambrell, CMA (AAMA), Trustee Patty Licurs, CMA (AAMA), Trustee Deborah Novak, CMA (AAMA), Trustee Virginia Thomas, CMA (AAMA), and Trustee Aimee Wicker, CMA (AAMA), PCMH CCE. The hottest topics from this meeting included a discussion over the 5 different exams that are available for Medical Assisting, and the fact that only one provides an actual *credential* (that being the CMA (AAMA) exam).

The discussion then went into the review of the Credential Engine Certification and Licensure Advisory Group (CLAG). We were directed to Page 47, line 16 of our Delegate’s Package to follow along with this discussion. AAMA president Julie Flatten, CMA (AAMA), RN, EMT began the discussion of how CLAG is creating a database of all Medical Assistant credentials from all entities providing testing for medical assistants and having them uploaded to a master database. In doing so, all academic and licensing credentials are readily available for review. Another discussion pertinent to our political future pertains to what was termed an “Anti-Credential”. This “anti-credential” is causing us to lose the ability to get credentials issued at the *state* level. It was also duly noted that the states of South Dakota and Washington are the only states that have an actual *license* available for medical assistants. Discussion then went on to address individual state issues. The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) has asked Washington State to allow a Medical Assistant who has been in active practice for 5 years to obtain a Medical Assistant credential in Washington. Some CMA (AAMA)’s had to re-take their CMA (AAMA) exams.

The Montana society has suffered due to the fact that the Montana State Legislature has closed the program in their state which was accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education (CAAHEP). Arizona’s current regulation requires that, in order for a Medical Assistant to practice in that state, they must have graduated from a Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education (CAAHEP) program or have military or on-the-job training. It was further stated that all candidates entering practice as a Medical Assistant in Arizona must possess either a CMA (AAMA), RMA or AMT credential. The state of Maryland wants Nurse Practitioners to delegate injection administration to Medical Assistants with proper training and credentialing. New Jersey law provides that only a Medical Assistant who has graduated a credentialed program (such as Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education (CAAHEP), etc.) and holding a CMA (AAMA) credential may administer injections to a patient. President Julie Flatten, CMA (AAMA), RN, EMT urged all in attendance to monitor their respective state’s Scope of Practice for any updates.

It was stated that there is an increasing infringement on the CMA (AAMA) intellectual properties on websites. “CMA (AAMA)” and “Certified Medical Assistant” are both trademarked by the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA). The Continuing Education Board reported to the Board of Trustees that the assessment-based certification for geriatrics is now available on line. Medical Assistants may purchase the package on line to take the program and receive 16 CEU’s and certification, or they can take individual modules for the CEU’s but not gain a credential.

The Certifying Board only reported the ‘changing of the guard’ to the Board of Trustees. The Awards Committee only reported that they had completed their tasks for the Excel Awards. The By-Laws Committee stated that they had reviewed the proposed changes to the current by-laws but put votes on hold due to the House of Delegates meeting and votes. The Membership Strategies and Marketing Team reported that the Convention App was up and running and has been received well and operating very successfully. They went on to state that the efforts for enhancement of membership has our new “Recruit 5” campaign to grow the membership of the AAMA and reward the recruiter by having his/her membership paid in full for the next year. This campaign does not include students, but only active and associate members. (For each member who recruits 5 new AAMA members, they will receive one year of AAMA membership as a reward for their efforts.) The Partnership Task Force reported that the American Cancer Society is here with us this weekend to improve education and efforts to promote colorectal cancer screenings.

The Excel Awards were rather exciting for this delegate, seeing how the individual efforts of each state society is both highly competitive and a great source of pride for the societies. Web page design and Newsletter layouts were the two that stuck out in his mind the most. It was no surprise to him or many of the delegates to see that our colleagues in North Carolina were front-and-center, along with Wisconsin. There was *way too much food* available, especially the dessert table!

The House of Delegates Meeting got off to a rocky start, with an agenda change and a stall that lasted the better part of an hour, much to the chagrin of the members of the state delegations. Once the program got started again, everything ran surprisingly smooth. There were many questions presented to the House leadership, then we recessed for the day. Upon returning for our evening session, we were surprised by the announcement of our own Joyce Nakano, CMA-A (AAMA) receiving “Life Member” status. This delegate was unable to contain his exuberance when Joyce’s name was called out, jumping out of his chair and yelling “RIGHT ON!” before noticing Joyce was crying. As Joyce made her way from the back of the room to the podium through the sea of people there, she received a plethora of hugs and congratulations that (I would swear) went on for about 8 to 10 minutes. Little did I know that this was somewhat of a conspiracy, and the culprits were a part of the California delegation! Gini Marquette, CMA (AAMA) and Susan Ojeda, CMA (AAMA) were up to their necks in making this honor come to be, and they were trying their hardest not to give up the surprise to Joyce… It worked! This delegate expected that the HOD meeting would be very long and arduous, but to the surprise of all, voting on the various issues was completed in a very expedient fashion and we were finished with all matters of business by 8:30 p.m.

During the weekend, this delegate managed to get into eight CEU classes, leaving with a total of 16 CEU’s combined in Clinical, Administration and General categories. The classes he took were “Autism Early Intervention - The Body/Brain Connection”, “Techniques of Phlebotomy”, “The Role of the Medical Assistant in Colorectal Cancer Screening”, “Chronic and Congenital GI Conditions”, “Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR)”, “Video Games and the Brain”, “Pseudobulbar Affect”, and “COPD: Not Just Another Acronym”. This delegate stands as a testament to fast-track completion of the mandatory 60 CEU’s in a timely manner. He has amassed 46.5 CEU credits over just a little more than 2 years, and has done so by attending both state and national level meetings and taking as many CEU classes as time will allow, as well as taking some on line through the AAMA website. This delegate expects to have all 60 required CEU’s completed before the end of the 2018 calendar year, 2 years ahead of the AAMA-mandated deadline.

The Presidents Luncheon on the final day was pretty awesome. We had a sit-down luncheon in the Continental Ballroom prior to leaving for our respective flights home. All delegates in attendance reflected on the events of the weekend, ate a fine meal together, and then bid fair journey to their colleagues.

It has been my honor and privilege to serve as Third Delegate for the California Society of Medical Assistants at this convention, and I wish to extend my appreciation to the Board of Directors and all members for their trust in allowing me to represent them at this event.

Leonard Slape, CMA (AAMA)

Third Delegate