

2016 National Convention, House of Delegates Report

By Mary Craven and Anita DeVito

This year's AMTA National Convention was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. We began our delegate duties by attending the Chapter Leadership Training with our Maine Chapter President Kelly LaCroix and hundreds of other AMTA members from every state.

This year's Chapter Leadership Training covered 3 topics:

1. Navigating the Volunteer Hub, a website set up by National to allow interaction of volunteers and distribution of information between national and chapter volunteers. Members can ask questions and post information from their Chapters that they think might be useful to other chapters.
2. The new Chapter Board structures that will be in use starting with the 2017 elections. Our chapter will have a 5-person board of directors instead of its present 7-member board.
3. How to prevent volunteer burnout. Self Care is an important aspect of our profession whether one is volunteering or just working in the profession. Ideas were given on a variety of methods to relax and rejuvenate.

The House of Delegates (HOD) meeting was different from the usual because this year there were no position statements or recommendations to consider. Instead we worked in groups to consider 2 questions put to us from the governance committee.

In 2014 the House of Delegates adopted a recommendation for AMTA National to pay the way for all delegates to attend the National Convention. States can have up to 5 delegates and now each state pays the way for their delegates to attend the convention. This can be quite expensive for states with fewer members. That recommendation went to the National Board which felt it did not have enough information so it passed the recommendation along to the Governance Committee for review. The Governance Committee is looking into it. They are looking at other organizations and what they do, surveying members, evaluating the efficacy of the HOD, and doing a cost/benefit analysis.

According to the By-Laws of the AMTA, the purpose of the HOD is to

1. Approve AMTA position statements as per policy.
2. Make recommendations to the National Board of Directors, as per policy, regarding:
 - A. AMTA bylaws
 - B. AMTA's mission and goals
 - C. Matters internal to the HOD
 - D. Business of the Association in general

Of the recommendations and position statements passed by the HOD in the last 10 years, very few have been adopted by the AMTA.

The two questions that were posed to the HOD by the Governance Committee were concerned with the purpose of the HOD. If we did not do the above stated purpose what other purpose could we do? What might be the role of the HOD in the future?

Question 1: If you could white board the HOD, what would you like the HOD to look like? In what ways would you reshape, repurpose, change duties, add things, etc.

Some of the ideas that were generated included the following:

- Hiring a researcher for our profession to write professional position statements that could possibly be published.
- Education for alternates and delegates. Delegate mentoring. Video training for delegates.
- Have a goal for the year that members could participate in. For example, mental health, members could write up case studies from their clients during the year and research could focus on the same topic.
- Have position statements come from national for us to evaluate.
- Designate a member to follow a position statement or recommendation through the Nat Board process.
- Quarterly online meetings for delegates.
- Voting on major shifts in AMTA policies being adopted by National.
- Cultivate greater awareness of the HOD in the states.
- Change the time line on the position statements to give states more time to get feedback from the members.
- Mock HOD in the states.
- Create better ways to inform state licensing boards on how the AMTA effects our profession.

Question 2: What other purposes might the HOD have?

Some of the ideas that were generated for this question included the following:

- Promote standards for education.
- Our membership is small for our profession, so promoting membership. Promote the 52 benefits of being a member.
- The business of business, career planning, retirement, transitions, marketing, mentoring.
- Membership surveys.
- Be a voice for the Board.
- Work more closely with the Board.
- Be a voice for the members.
- Promote the knowledge of massage.
- Support the legislative efforts of the states. Help unlicensed states get licensing. Work toward interstate transferable licenses and uniform standards for licensing.
- Work with lobbyists. Have lobbyists in the states work toward a common goal.
- Facilitate change within the chapters.
- Educate labor boards in the states.
- Promote massage and the AMTA to the medical community and the public.
- Inter-professional training and communication.
- Write peer review articles.
- Promote volunteerism.
- Advocate for education, research, business, pay structure, etc.

- Marketing in the news and media. Promoting AMTA members in the states.
- Contractor employee relations. Review laws governing employees versus outside contractors.
- Create more regional AMTA organizations.
- Be a venue for idea exchange.
- Increase communication with smaller groups; better communicate with members, boards, and local communities.

The next question would be: What would it look like to implement the above ideas?

The discussions in the small groups were lively and demonstrated that HOD members feel strongly about the HOD being a vibrant and participating entity within the AMTA.

Next year we will be meeting in September in Pasadena, California.