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A message from the president, James L. Shafer

Dear Fellow Audiologists,

I want to thank all of the new members that have joined PAA this year. With our core group of members we should have a record number of members this year.

Your board members have set an aggressive agenda to bring more services to the Audiologists of Pennsylvania. The goal that we have is to diversify the services that PAA brings to Audiologists of all areas of membership from students, University faculty, educational Audiologists, medically based Audiologists, private practice and industrial Audiologists.

To accomplish this we are investigating the redesign of your PAA website to allow an interactive bulletin board. This will allow problem solving utilizing the best and brightest minds in Pa., yours!

Additionally we are investigating a website section that will allow PAA member Audiologists to post employment and Au.D. externship opportunities to better help students, University faculty and employers to ensure that the best and the brightest audiologists stay in Pennsylvania.

As part of this focus we are discussing a special segment for our PAA convention that will focus on the needs of our Audiology student members. In an effort to become more in tune with all your needs and to ensure that you fully understand to scope of our current initiatives we are developing grassroots, town hall type meetings to allow your voice to better guide our efforts for the Audiologists of Pennsylvania.

We continue to bring your voice to the Department of Health and the Medical Assistance programs, insurance companies and state run agencies to streamline their system and improve reimbursement to make it more attractive for all Audiologists to supply services to those that need it but may have limited access to our services for whatever reason.

We are investigating software to allow increased efficiencies and quality for our treasurer and director of publications.

I encourage all students to join PAA, your externship and employment opportunities will grow. University Faculty, I encourage you to join, placement of your externs may be easier allowing you more time to focus on other important areas of your job. Educational Audiologists we need to know how we can better serve you in PA. Medically based Audiologists what do the Hospitals and physicians need from PAA. Private practice and industrial Audiologists; what legislative initiatives are needed in our state? Each of you will benefit in membership in your own and unique way. PLEASE JOIN TODAY, together we can make a difference.

I also encourage each of you to join a committee to help expand our focus. We need your help to develop our agenda; please email, phone or write me or one of the other board members and offer your services in an area of your interest, we would love your help.

I look forward to hearing from each of you and a growing PAA membership, thank you for a great start to 2006.

Sincerely,
James L. Shafer, AuD, FAAA
President

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*JOAN – PRESIDENT ELECT**Accomplishments of our Collective Voice*

Since I began with the PAA as Secretary in January, 2000, significant milestones have been reached which raise the profile and delineate the profession within the Commonwealth. Additionally, the Academy has continued to sponsor educational meetings, most notably the September Annual meeting which averages about 100 attendees. Spring regional workshops were held through 2002, and the Academy continues to co-sponsor educational meetings with PA universities.

We are the Voice of Audiology in the Commonwealth and we are now being heard! As evidence of the audibility of our collective “voice”, the following milestones are offered:

The Academy hired lobbyist Diane Salerno in June of 2001 to put audiology on the political map in Harrisburg.

In 2002, the PAA established a Political Action Committee (PAC) Fund to support legislators who understand and support our mission.

In 2004, then- President Susan Parr was contacted by High Mark Blue Shield for information on reimbursement to audiologists for vestibular/balance assessment.

For the first time ever, a group of audiologists met with officials of the Medical Assistance office in the fall of 2003. We were accorded a new status (no longer provider type 50) within this system. Dialogue with this department continues in an effort to streamline payment for services to the hearing-impaired children in PA. In 2004, at the request of the PAA, Deputy Secretary of Health Richard Lee issued a reprieve from the requirement that audiologists be subject to a 6 month apprenticeship when applying for a hearing aid fitter's certificate. Several PAA members were instrumental in the passage of Act 89 of 2002 which mandates Universal Newborn Hearing Screening.

Most recently, your Academy has been asked and participated in hearing screenings at the Pennsylvania Farm Show (January 7-14) in cooperation with Sertoma.

Member benefits now include a 20% discount for Audiology Online courses, and a discounted entrance fee to the Body Worlds Exhibit at the Franklin Institute.

In November of 2004, the PAA re-wrote and had introduced by Senator Charles Lemmond of Luzerne County, Senate Bill 119, the audiology and speech pathology licensure bill which appropriately reflects the status of audiology as it is currently practiced. This bill is designed to replace the outdated licensure law of 1984, Act 238.

The new licensure bill will be a tough fight for audiology. However, your Academy is prepared to “hang-in-there” to establish and increase the public profile of audiology as the most qualified profession for treatment of audio-vestibular disorders.

Submitted by

Joan D'Alessandro, AuD, FAAA,

President-Elect

With a louder voice, we can be heard in all corners of the Capitol in Harrisburg. Get your colleagues to join. We will have the public, consumer profile as the profession best qualified to treat those with hearing and balance disorders. When a loved one is frustrating family and friends with auditory communication problems, the comment “You better see an audiologist” will be the refrain.

NEW MEMBER BENEFITS FOR 2006

In January, *US News and World Report* listed Audiology as the #1 healthcare career! What exciting news for our profession. It appears that students in PA Audiology programs also must agree with that assessment. In 2005, PAA's student memberships increased substantially to a total of *SIXTY FOUR* student members. This was our highest number ever of student members and appears to be a very encouraging sign for the future of Audiology in PA. PAA is hoping to reach out to the student membership and provide more opportunities for involvement in 2006.

Our Fellow memberships totaled 235 in 2005. As we begin 2006, our focus is to substantially increase the number of Fellow members. With over 800 PA licensed audiologists, PAA has consistently represented about one third of that number. We hope to add to that number this year by offering more benefits to PA audiologists. Some of the additional benefits thus far are a partnership with Audiology Online to offer a 20% CEU discount to PAA members. Also, PAA has partnered with the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia to offer members a discount for their BODY WORLDS exhibit. Details on how to obtain these discounts are on the website www.paudiology.org.

As always, PAA hopes to be the voice for audiologists in PA and will continue to provide input on upcoming legislative and insurance reimbursement issues to continue to promote audiology. Members will be receiving more email updates on these topics as well as information on any educational seminars that will be offered. PAA hopes to soon offer an online bulletin board format where members can discuss a variety of topics.

2006 looks to be an exciting time for our profession. Please join PAA and become involved in PA Audiology issues.

THANK YOU!

The Pennsylvania Academy of Audiology would like to thank the following exhibitors for their participation in our 12th Annual Convention in State College last September:

American Academy of Audiology, Audiological Services, Bio-Logic Systems, Cochlear, Ear Q Group, GN Otometrics, GN ReSound, Hearing HealthCare News, Instrument Assoc., Interton AHS, Micro Tech, Midlantic, Oaktree Products, Inc., Oticon, PCO, Phonak, Phonic Ear, Qualitone, Rayovac, Rexton, SeboTek, Siemens, Sonic Innovations, Sonus, Starkey, Unitron, Vivatone Hearing System and Widex.

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NOTE FROM VP of EDUCATIONKAMAL

Dear PA audiologist,

Organizing our annual convention these past two years has been an overwhelming but very rewarding challenge for me. I never could have imagined how much detail is involved in the planning of a convention, such as contacting speakers, making travel and hotel arrangements, putting together the program and registration materials and working with the hotel to make sure we have adequate refreshments and comfortable surroundings. In addition to this contacts have to be made to ensure we offer CEU credits and once the convention is over, we have to ensure attendees get the appropriate credit.

I would like to thank Stephanie Palmer and Kim Buehler for their help with assembling an excellent variety of speakers for convention 2005. I would also like to thank my office staff as I could not possibly organize the convention without their help. And a big thank to Jim Ziegler for helping with registration and speakers last year. A special thank you to Susan Parr for her boundless energy and enthusiasm in organizing the Silent Auction and raising \$6733 for PAA. And a very warm thank you to the Penn State and Bloomsburg students who spent many hours helping at the registration desk during convention.

Our 13th Annual convention will be held at the Harrisburg Hilton on September 28-30th, 2006. Stephanie Palmer and I have already begun working on the program for this year. Featured speakers this year will include Patricia McCarthy, Ph.D., Kris English, Ph.D., Terry Ives, Au.D., Deborah Moncrieff, Ph.D., Diane Sabo, Ph.D. and many more. We are working hard to plan another excellent convention for you.

Our goal is to have record attendance this year so please **mark your calendars now. Plan to attend and invite your colleagues as well.** As you know, according to new legislation, licensed PA Audiologists will be required to earn and show proof of CEUs this year.

PAA is also delighted to co-sponsor other opportunities for you to attend quality educational seminars and **earn CEUs** right here in Pennsylvania throughout the year.

For more information about our convention, this FREE seminar, and other educational opportunities please visit our website at www.paudiology.org. Also, please feel free to email or call me or any of your board members if you need additional information.

Yours Truly,
Kamal A. Elliot, Au.D.
VP of Education

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FINAL RULE ON CONTINUING EDUCATION

The House Professional Licensure Committee met recently to consider final rule **16A - 6802** which mandates 20 hours of continuing education as a requirement for licensure renewal for those professionals licensed/certified by the Speech-Language & Hearing Examiners Licensure Board.

Professionals will have to complete 20 hours of continuing education between 2006 and 2008 for licensure renewal.

Over the summer, the Chairman of the committee, Rep. Thomas Gannon, met with Commissioner Basil Merenda, to clarify several points which were agreed to and placed in the final rule. Those points were:

- the definition of continuing education will remain the same
- the waiver language was made consistent throughout the final rule
- approval of providers of continuing education was clarified

The final rule now proceeds to the Independent Regulatory Review Commission. Within 30 days of the receipt of the final-form regulation, the Commission must hold a public meeting and take formal action to approve or disapprove the regulation. If the Commission does not act within that time frame, it will be deemed to have approved the regulation.