

VIRGINIA PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION INC.
THE VIRGINIAN

A Chapter of
APTA
American Physical Therapy Association
The Science of Healing. The Art of Caring.

JODY GUNDRUM, EDITOR

SPRING 2006

President's Message

What a change a year (or 6) makes! Did you know that *US News and World Report* has identified physical therapy as 1 of 18 "Top Jobs" in the US for 2006? Have you also followed the recent employment survey released by APTA? APTA reports current unemployment among physical therapy professionals as 0.2%, and a median annual income of \$68,000 for PTs and \$37,000 for PTAs. This represents a substantive increase over the past few years. We are in high demand. Employment opportunities abound for both new graduates and experienced clinicians. Physical therapy professionals have many options for work environments that foster a healthy balance of work, home, and community life. Our young professionals are insisting we provide this balance, which is a very healthy thing.

This is very different from the world we experienced just a few short years ago when the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) first went into effect. From 1999 through 2002, for the first time in the memory of most of our members, new graduates had difficulty finding employment, and experienced practitioners reported lay-offs and cut-backs in hours and benefits. Concerned practitioners expressed frustration at their inability to provide services in the way they believed best met the needs of their patients. Indeed, a few practitioners left physical therapy altogether. Others struck out and started their own niche practices not dependent on third-party reimbursement. Then, in 2003, things began to turn around. This reversal did not happen by chance. PTs and PTAs, individually and with the assistance of APTA and

its components, worked diligently for creative and effective solutions. Some practitioners worked quietly behind the scenes and others in more visible roles. The current system continues to be imperfect, but is better than it was in 1999. There is a constant struggle between cost containment and access to quality services. We must continually engage in dialogue and creative problem solving to ensure access to our services.

The current, very low unemployment rate exposes a new problem: a shortage of physical therapy practitioners. This shortage is an emerging professional crisis. If we do not provide adequate numbers of PTs and PTAs to meet the growing needs of the health care industry, the health care industry will find other groups to fill the void. This will likely be to the detriment of our patients and our profession. Part of our professional responsibilities is to look to the long-term needs of our profession, and the patients we serve. Our current shortage of practitioners makes this a "seller's market." In a seller's market, we have more ability to negotiate an employment contract that meets our needs. Take this opportunity to positively influence future practice, by looking cautiously at employment opportunities. Insist on an

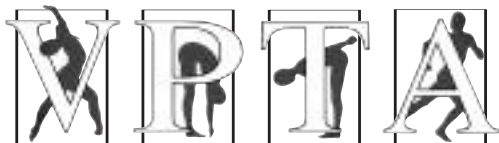
employment arrangement committed to the tenets of best clinical and professional practice.

The health care system is always evolving. The next 6 years promise to be as eventful as the last 6 years. Cost containment will remain a central concern in the foreseeable future. The transformation of Medicare is just getting underway, and we, as present-day physical therapy professionals, must be active participants in this transformation. Be proactive! VPTA is a powerful advocate in these battles. Encourage your employer to include APTA membership as an employment benefit, and provide this to your employees if you are the employer. Stay informed. Regularly reexamine your practice strategies against current best practice. Write letters to insurers, regulators, and to your legislators, and add your voice to APTA's in the networking and advocacy efforts. Make a conscious effort to encourage prospective PTs and PTAs to consider physical therapy as a career. Almost all of the students I interview describe at least one PT or PTA who inspired them to choose this profession. You can make a difference in our future.

Rita Wong, PT, EdD
President

Hampton Students Win National Membership Contest

Hampton University's Doctor of Physical Therapy Class of 2006 won APTA's National Student Membership contest. Former APTA President Marilyn Moffat, PT, PhD, FAPTA, CSCS, will address the Class of 2006 at the Department of Physical Therapy pregraduation ceremony in May.



The Virginian, the newsletter of the Virginia Physical Therapy Association, is published quarterly. The deadlines for submission of materials are the 15th of January, April, July, and October.

Articles and news items of interest should be submitted to **The Virginian**. Letters to the editor must be signed and include an address and telephone number. Articles and letters printed express the author's views only and are not necessarily the official policy of VPTA. All materials submitted are subject to editorial consideration and review.

Ad copy should be submitted to the Chapter Office on an issue-by-issue basis. Checks are to be made payable to the Virginia Physical Therapy Association Inc and must accompany the ad copy. All advertisers will receive copies of the issue in which they advertise; advertising in **The Virginian** does not imply VPTA endorsement of products or services. The right to reject, add, or change wording in accordance with VPTA and editorial policy is retained by the publisher.

The rates for advertising are as follows for camera-ready copy:

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Call for Research Abstracts

VPTA is now accepting research abstracts for poster and platform presentations at the 2006 VPTA Annual Conference, which will be held October 20-22 at the Sheraton Reston Hotel in Reston, Virginia. Research studies, evidence-based practice reports, case reports, case studies, and presentations on topics of interest are welcomed. Submission guidelines and the official "Call for Abstracts" can be found at www.vpta.org. The deadline for submission is September 1, 2006. For answers to any questions you may have, contact Mike Krackow, research chair, at mkrackow@jchs.edu or 540/224-4478.

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— Committees, Workgroups, & Special-Interest Groups —

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Calendar of Events

Date Event
March

1 Deadline: Applications for VPTA student stipend to PT 2006: Annual Conference & Exposition of the American Physical Therapy Association—Orlando

April

7-9 VPTA Annual Retreat—Smith Mountain Lake
15 Deadline: Article submissions for *The Virginian* Summer newsbrief

June

21-24 PT 2006: Annual Conference & Exposition of the American Physical Therapy Association—Orlando

July

15 Deadline: Applications for student stipends for APTA's 2006 National Student Conclave in Dallas and the VPTA Annual Conference in Reston

September

1 Deadline: Submission of research abstracts for poster and platform presentations at the 2006 VPTA Annual Conference

October—Mark Your Calendars!

20-22 VPTA Annual Conference—Reston

Visit www.vpta.org for more event announcements throughout the year.

Virginia Board of Physical Therapy Update

The Virginia Board of Physical Therapy remains very active. Two Board members, Maureen Lyons, PT, and Gayle Garnett, PT, represented Virginia at the Annual Meeting and Delegate Assembly of the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) in Austin, Texas, in September. The Virginia Board of Physical Therapy is currently revising its bylaws to more accurately reflect the operations of the Board as well as those of the Virginia Department of Health Professions.

A change in license renewal date is now in effect. Instead of birth month, a December 31, 2006, renewal date applies to all PT and PTA licensees. If your historical renewal date (birth month) is earlier in the year, you will be issued a new license, at no fee, reflecting the renewal date of December 31, 2006. Prior to December, you will receive your renewal notice. To make life easier, renewal can be completed on the Virginia Department of Health Professions Web site.

Continued competency hours for the previous 2 years are required upon license renewal in December 2006, which may give you a few additional months to complete this requirement. While only those being audited must submit paperwork, all must meet continued competency requirements. The good news keeps coming—fees have been reduced for this renewal period to \$60 for physical therapists and \$30 for physical therapist assistants!

Virginia PT and PTA licensees are encouraged to attend Board meetings, and we welcome questions and comments. The next meeting of the full Board will take place on April 28, 2006, at 9:00 am at the Virginia Department of Health Professions off Broad Street in Richmond. For a full schedule of meetings, a roster of current Board members and staff, forms for downloading, laws and regulations, and much more, please visit the Virginia Board of Physical Therapy Web site at www.dhp.state.va.us/PhysicalTherapy.

Gayle Garnett, PT, MBA
Virginia Board of Physical Therapy President

Direct Access Not an Insurance Liability

Healthcare Providers Service Organization (HPSO), the professional liability insurance company endorsed by APTA, recently sent a letter to APTA's Government Affairs Department regarding physical therapy liability rates in direct access vs. non-direct access states. The January 2006 letter states:

We are aware that 39 states currently allow physical therapists direct access to patients without a physician referral. We regularly monitor trends to be sure we are adequately accounting for all risks and have not noted any trends relative to the practice of physical therapy in direct access states.

Direct access is not a risk factor that we specifically screen for in the underwriting of our program nor do we charge a premium differential for physical therapists in direct access states. We currently have no specific underwriting concerns with respect to direct access for physical therapists.

2005 VPTA Auction Is a Hit With Conference Attendees

The 2005 Annual Auction held during the VPTA Annual Conference in Tidewater was a huge success. We want to thank everyone involved: the coordinators, member volunteers, student volunteers, solicitors for the donations, donors, and attendees.

A special thank you goes to Alison Seger, who volunteered countless hours coordinating the donations, organizing the event and set-up volunteers, and ensuring smooth sailing on site. Thanks also go to Marilyns Randolph, who coordinated student volunteers who made the work easier for all of us on the night of the auction, and to Debbie Kelly, who handled all of the hotel arrangements. Brian Hoke and Tom Boeke were instrumental in the check-out process. We also thank the individual district captains: Amy Beatty (Tidewater), Bob Kane (Blue Ridge), Francie Mitchell (Northern), Alison Seger (Central), and Kim Simms (Southwest). Last, but certainly not least, thank you to the members of the Tidewater District for hosting a terrific event.

Gold Sponsor

Gentiva Health Services in Virginia Beach

Bronze Sponsors

Hampton University Physical Therapy Program, Mountain and Valley Districts of VPTA, Northern District of VPTA, Old Dominion University Physical Therapy Program, Rehabilitation Associates of Central Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Physical Therapy

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VPTA members applaud a winning bid at the VPTA Annual Conference Auction.



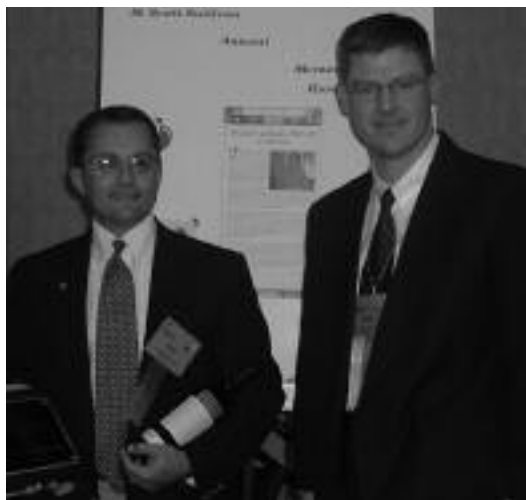
Annual Conference attendees check out the research poster presentation of Diana Venskus, PT, PhD.

Karim, Tammy Kelly, Karen Kott, Charlotte Kirchner, Kroger (Richmond), La Bodega Hampton, Lebanon Physical Therapy, Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, Lifetime Sports Store, Maggiano's Little Italy (Richmond), Lori Magnuson, Dr. George Maihafer, Bob Mannion, Mira Mariano, Mariner's Museum, Mark's Golf Shop, Martha Jefferson Hospital Outpatient PT Care Center, Amy Massey, Virginia May, Mary McCaffrey, Lynn McDaniel, Marc Meadows, Medical Equipment Distributors of Virginia, Mid-Atlantic Physical Therapy Associates, Mill Street Grill, Miss Hampton II Harbor Cruises, Mister Roberts Ladies' and Men's Sportswear, Francie Mitchell, The Museum of the Confederacy, Mystery Dinner Playhouse, Kitty Nadeau, Nail Academy of Virginia, Nauticus, The National Maritime Center, Oasis Sports Park, O'Toole's Restaurant, Outback Steakhouse (Richmond), Panera Bread, Peak Experiences Rock Climbing Center, Physical Therapy Works, Physio Tech, Physiotherapy Associates, Physiotherapy Associates (Winchester), Pine Street Barber Shop, Pomoco Nissan of Hampton, Pomoco Nissan of Smithfield, Portsmouth Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Powhatan Physical Therapy, Pro Care PT, PLC, Professional Therapies of Roanoke, Radisson Hotel (Hampton), Dr Marilyns Randolph, Red Lobster Restaurant (Richmond), Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel, Retreat Hospital Rehabilitation Services, Richmond Athletic Club, Richmond Ice Zone, Richmond Kickers, River City Diner, Douglas Rohr, RTW Solutions PLC, Ruby Tuesdays (Richmond), Brenda Sanson, Sydney Sawyer, Sarah

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Mike Krakow, PTA, PhD, ATC, CSCS, presents Mira Mariano, PT, MS, OCS, with the Outstanding Research Award.



Mike Richardson, PT, presents Scott Crabtree, PT, with the Scott Sullivan award.

Schmidt, Neil Schott, Second Time Around Antiques, Dr Mary Snyder Shall, Sheltering Arms Hospital, Sheltering Arms Hospital Management Team, Shenandoah University Class of 2008, Shenandoah University Division of Physical Therapy, Shenandoah Valley Physical Therapy, Kim Simms, Snap-On Tools, Sneed's Nursery, Strawberry Street Café, Diane Stroud, Karen Taylor Solles, Tappahannock Pharmacy, Theatre IV, Therapy Staff of Rehab Plus Associates, Trainikins Inc, University of Virginia Athletic Department, Valentine Museum—The Richmond Center, Diana Venskus, Virginia Commonwealth University Athletic Department, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Physical Therapy, Virginia Dare's Barber Shop, Virginia Living Museum, VPTA Board of Directors, Sue Waffle, Whispers of Time, John Whistler, Patrice Winter, Layne and Judy Witherell, Dr Rita Wong, Pam Wood, YMCA of South Hampton Roads, Suzanne Young

The next Annual Auction will be held Saturday, October 21, during the 2006 VPTA Annual Conference in Reston. We hope that you will help us obtain sponsorships and donations. Look for more information at your district meetings in the near future.

*Mark Bouziane, PT, and Betty Cobaugh, PT
2006 Annual Auction Co-Chairs*

Shenandoah Students Attend World of Possibilities Exposition

The 2005 World of Possibilities Exposition was held this past November in Alexandria, Virginia. I attended with two fellow Shenandoah University physical therapist students, as well as one of our professors. The exposition had a variety of booths highlighting resources for individuals with disabilities, caretakers, and health care professionals. The exhibits included advancements in wheelchairs, feeding tubes, adaptive silverware, and conversion vans. Community resource groups for people with disabilities, from school age to elderly, also attended; their booths provided information on financial planning for a family member with a disability, reading to individuals who are blind, and wheelchair fitting. Some of the booths targeted the senior population, including legal services for discrimination claims, packing assistance when moving to a new home, and senior assisted living, as well as volunteer opportunities for people in the community.

We were particularly intrigued by a woman who was representing an after-school pediatric therapy facility. The facility offers what they call conduction therapy, which seems to be an intensive combination of occupational and physical therapies for children with disabilities. According to this method, developed by a doctor from Hungary, people are trained in various activities to improve the coordination, motor control, and physical abilities of the children. It is not reimbursable by insurance, nor is it licensed or otherwise regulated. The families pay out of pocket and examinations are conducted at intake and 6 months later.

After spending about an hour and a half at the exposition, I found some useful resources, but I was disappointed by the small number of exhibitors and the lack of demonstrations and exhibits geared toward health care professionals. All in all, I enjoyed seeing the equipment and talking to the representatives, but felt the exhibition could have included more for the health care professional rather than focused on state-of-the-art equipment.

*Meghan McFarland, SPT, Shenandoah University Class of 2007,
and Melissa Wolff-Burke, PT, EdD, ATC*

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Lebanon Physical Therapy Hosts 5K Race

Lebanon Physical Therapy hosted their 1st Annual Get Physical 5K Run and 1-Mile Fitness Walk on Saturday, October 8, in celebration of National Physical Therapy Month. It was a chance for the staff at Lebanon Physical Therapy to endorse exercise, increase awareness of the physical therapy profession, and raise money for the American Cancer Society.

All registrants received a well-designed T-shirt commemorating the race, a cancer awareness bracelet, a grab bag of assorted physical therapy items, a walking tips booklet, and refreshments following the race. All walkers and runners were proud of their accomplishments on the challenging course. Apart from trophies for age group and overall winners, door prizes were given away, including gift certificates, clothing, and electronic gadgets.

The inaugural event was a wonderful success, raising over \$600 for the American Cancer Society. Several of the experienced rac-



Members gather for the annual M Scott Sullivan Memorial walk/run at the VPTA Annual Conference.

ers commented that this event was the most organized inaugural race they had ever participated in. The staff of Lebanon Physical Therapy greatly enjoyed their experience and plan to stage this race/walk every year to continue promoting their profession, as well as health and fitness, to their community.

Greg Cornforth, PT

Physical Therapy in Nicaragua: My Trip With Health Volunteers Overseas

In January of 2005, I had the pleasure of traveling to Nicaragua for a week to teach at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua (UNAN), a university in Managua with the only physical therapy program in the country. I was there on behalf of a group called Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO), a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve health care in developing countries through academic and clinical education. Volunteers with HVO must fund themselves or find support through various charitable or professional organizations. From my experience, it is money worth spending!

I taught a 30-hour course regarding the physical therapist management of patients with various pulmonary diseases and disorders. Pulmonary problems are particularly problematic in Nicaragua because of frequent open air burning of trash and debris, wide-spread poverty, and limited infant and child prevention and medical services. Bronchitis, influenza, emphysema, and acute respiratory syndromes are the most common diagnoses there.

Class size varied from 12 to 15 participants because of participants' various work schedules. There were five physical therapy program faculty members, two nursing program faculty members, two-five area clinicians, and three current students. The Physical Therapy Department faculty will use the information to update their curriculum, while the clinicians were there for continuing education purposes. I wasn't expecting the nurses or the PT students, but everyone worked well together and it provided an opportunity to discuss overlapping scopes of practice.

Because the first language of the majority of Nicaraguans is Spanish, my knowledge of which is limited, I brought a friend (Marcos Gonzales, from Cross Over Health Center in Richmond) along with me to translate. Marcos did an excellent job, particularly in identifying local terminology for different words or concepts. My written materials were translated

through the Microsoft SYSTRAN translation software, which is not well suited to medical terminology, but worked well enough in a pinch. There is also a large amount of more accurately translated material on the National Library of Medicine Web site (www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/medlineplus.html), although it is geared to patients rather than to medical professionals.

The class participants demonstrated a hunger to learn and they immediately began to use the information from the class to solve problems in their respective practice settings. Professionals and students with such evident dedication to the profession will continue to advance their level of practice in the future.

Even though I was in Nicaragua primarily for professional purposes, I didn't spend all my time in the classroom. Marcos and I took time out for sightseeing as well. We stayed at a university guest house and made the acquaintance of a visiting history professor from Argentina who, along with one of her Nicaraguan colleagues, took us out for a night at a wonderful old market in Masaya. The Physical Therapy Department chair and some students also took us out for an afternoon to tour the colonial capital of Granada and to visit a volcano called Mombacho. There are volcanoes everywhere—several of them still active—as well as some large lakes. We didn't make it to the Caribbean side of the country, but we spent a wonderful Saturday on the Pacific coast in San Juan del Sur, compliments of another faculty member and her family—everyone we met was so friendly and welcoming.

I made many friends on this trip and will be returning at the end of February 2006 for a follow-up course. I encourage anyone with an interest in combining service with travel to visit the HVO Web site at www.hvousing.org. The experience was as memorable as it was rewarding!

Dianne V Jewell, PT, PhD, CCS, FAACVPR

Nominating Committee Update

I'd like to thank Mike Richardson for a great job as VPTA Nominating Chair over the past few years. As we get used to this wacky weather (snow one day, 60 degrees the next) and winter moves into spring and summer, I'd like you to think about what you can contribute to your professional organization. We have such wonderful people in our chapter—why not set a resolution to get more involved in both district and state association events? It really takes a small amount of time to make a difference. We are so fortunate to have a large, vocal, and active chapter! It's never too early to start thinking about elections. Here are the positions that we will vote on at the 2006 VPTA Annual Conference in Reston, Virginia, October 20-22, 2006:

Vice-President
Treasurer
VA Delegates
Nominating Committee members for Northern, Tidewater, and Central districts
PTA Caucus Representative

The term for these positions is 2 years, except for that of PTA Caucus Representative, which is 1 year.

Also, I'd like you to think about members of VPTA who are worthy of a nomination for various VPTA awards this year:

Beb Cash Award
M Scott Sullivan Leadership Award
PTA Award

If you would like to find out more, please visit VPTA's Web site at www.vpta.org; click the "Leadership" link and you will find more information about upcoming positions, elections, candidate bio forms, and Nominating Committee members for all of our districts. For more information on VPTA awards, click on the "VPTA Awards" link. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or your district Nominating Committee representative. We will be working on a preliminary slate of candidates by the VPTA Leadership Retreat in April 2006, so if you are at all interested, please contact me at 757/683-3289 or mmariano@odu.edu.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy, and prosperous year!

*Mira Mariano, PT, MS, OCS
VPTA Nominating Chair*

VPTA Membership Report

Our goal for the 2005-2006 fiscal year is to increase membership in the Association by 3%. VPTA saw a 2.5% increase during fall 2005. We are only able to achieve such growth if members encourage their colleagues and other non-members to "join the team," so I appreciate all your efforts to promote the Association and the physical therapy profession throughout the year.

The following is a summary of the objectives the Membership Committee established for this year.

Our recruitment efforts include:

1. Providing a discount on Annual Conference registration if a nonmember joins APTA/VPTA at the time of registration.
2. Conducting a **Spring 2006 Membership Drive**, and mailing APTA/VPTA marketing materials to all licensees in the state who are not members of the Association. This will be an intensive recruitment and awareness effort to gain membership.
3. Assigning a student liaison to each VPTA committee to get students engaged early in the process and to encourage membership and involvement after graduation.

Our retention efforts include:

1. Mailing "Welcome Packets" to all new members of the Association, and encouraging attendance at meetings and involvement in VPTA.
2. Providing a rebate to members who bring a nonmember to Annual Conference.

The VPTA annual retreat is scheduled for Saturday, April 8, at Smith Mountain Lake. This is the opportunity to develop new goals and objectives for the upcoming year (2006-2007) and budgeting for those activities. Your involvement in this meeting is crucial, and I hope you can make it. After all, membership means more than just "signing up." It also means "showing up."

*Tom Boeke, PT
VPTA Membership Chair*

Transitional DPT Program Begins at Marymount University

After many months of planning, the Marymount University physical therapy program is pleased to announce the launching of our transitional doctor of physical therapy (tDPT) program. The first cohort of 40 students began the program on February 15, 2006. This 2-year, part-time program is primarily delivered in a distance education format. Steven Tepper, PT, PhD, serves as the program director. The mission of the tDPT program is to pro-

vide an affordable, practical, and career-enhancing academic program that allows US-licensed PTs with master's degrees in physical therapy to transition their degree to the doctor of physical therapy degree. More information on this new program is available from the university Web site at www.marymount.edu/academic/healthprof/pt/.

PTASIG Report

The past year has been an exciting one for PTAs across the country. The most notable issue involved the proposed new structure for PTA governance. The Representative Body of the National Assembly (RBNA), the National Assembly membership, and the APTA House of Delegates all voted in favor of dissolving the RBNA and National Assembly and created in its place the PTA Caucus. This caucus consists of one PTA representative from each of the state chapters. In addition, the new structure adds an advisory panel of PTAs that serves as a direct link to the APTA Board of Directors, as well as reserved slots for PTAs on existing APTA advisory panels, including Education and Practice. Finally, the new structure increases the number of PTA delegates to the House of Delegates from two to five. While these delegates are not voting delegates, they are now allowed to not only speak on the floor of the House, but also bring forth motions to the House. These changes are exciting because they not only reduce the inefficiency of the previous structure, but also improve PTA integration, representation, and participation within APTA.

Another motion was passed by both the RBNA and House of Delegates which directly affects our chapter. This motion eliminated the use of the term "affiliate" to describe the PTA. We are now referred to as PTA members and, as a result, the Virginia Chapter Affiliate Special-Interest Group (ASIG) has changed its name to PTA Special-Interest Group (PTASIG). For additional information regarding PTA-related motions at the 2005 House of Delegates, you can refer to the PTASIG link on the VPTA Web site.

In other, more local news, the Virginia PTASIG held its annual business meeting in October 2005, during the VPTA Annual Conference. Aside from the normal business issues, the PTASIG membership was all abuzz with the new structural changes in the PTA governance. The membership had productive discussions on the potential of these changes as well as other PTA issues that arose during the 2005 RBNA meeting and House of Delegates. As a group, we are eager to see more involvement of PTAs on local, state, and national levels, especially now that so many more opportunities are out there for us. (If you are interested in becoming more active or just want to be better informed of what's going on, you can check out the VPTA Web site or e-mail me at siesta@adelphia.net.)



Sarah Schmidt, PTA, presents Judy Witherell, PTA, with the Outstanding PTA Award.

We also held officer elections at the business meeting. Mike Krackow was elected vice president and Becky Duff was elected secretary, replacing outgoing officers Bonnie Black and Judy Witherell. I'd like to extend a huge thank you to both Bonnie and Judy for all of their hard work and contributions to the SIG over the past 2 years! Finally, I'd like to announce the recipient of the 2005 Outstanding PTA Award. It was my pleasure and honor to give the award to Judy Witherell during the business meeting. Judy has given many hours not only PTASIG, but to VPTA as a whole. She has served as a SIG officer and has been a member of various VPTA committees. She most recently served as the Central District director, a first for any PTA in the Virginia Chapter and possibly any other chapter in the nation. Judy is truly deserving of this award.

Unfortunately, I have to report that Judy has recently moved out of the state of Virginia. While I am happy for her to be moving on to bigger and better things, she will be deeply missed by the members of the PTASIG as well as many others within VPTA. Judy has truly shown herself to be an emerging leader on many levels and we will surely see her name more and more on the national level. We wish her all the best in her new endeavors!

*Sarah Schmidt, PTA
PTASIG Chair*

Marymount University and National Rehabilitation Hospital Collaborate on New Research Projects

Jason Craig, D Phil, MCSP, is serving as a consultant and co-investigator for a research project titled "Pressure Distribution, Biomechanical Effects and Comfort of the 24/7 Shoe in a Normal Population During Walking," directed by Alison Lichy, PT, MSPT, at National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH). The study will investigate, both biomechanically and subjectively, the effectiveness of a newly designed shoe with subjects who routinely spend a large portion of their working day on their feet.

Focused student thesis projects will emerge from this overall research undertaking.

Cathy Elrod, PT, PhD, is serving as the Policy Advisory Panel coordinator for a research project titled Joint Replacement Outcomes in IRFs and Nursing Treatment Sites (JOINTS) study. The project is a collaboration between NRH and the Institute for Clinical Outcomes Research in Salt Lake City.

The State of Payer Relations

With a new year upon us, we are all incited to reflect on the past year and look forward to this new year with optimism, goal setting, and the best of intentions. I am no exception. I assumed the position of Payer Relations Specialist in the spring of 2005. With almost 1 year under my belt, I am taking this opportunity to inform you of the activities of this position in 2005 and the goals and strategies for 2006.

In 2005, each of the major payers in Virginia were contacted by phone and in writing to alert them to the purpose of this position and to offer input and assistance as needed. These payers are: Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Cigna, United Healthcare/MAMSI, Aetna, and Trailblazer Health. The VPTA membership has been informed of the presence of the position and of the standing offer to assist them in issues involving third-party payers. I have responded to payer issues that members have submitted to me. I have kept the VPTA Board of Directors informed of my activities via quarterly reports and have placed articles in past publications of *The Virginian* as well as posted information on the VPTA Web site. I have placed issues requiring your immediate attention on the Web site listserv to keep you up to date on current happenings and request your input as needed. I have assisted in generating responses from VPTA to local coverage determinations (LCDs) from Medicare and to policy changes proposed by the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS). I have spoken at two District meetings, participated in a Medicare teleconference, and attended the APTA Reimbursement Chairs Forum. These are the accomplishments; now let's move on to the areas that need work in 2006.

The aforementioned information includes nothing in regard to face time with payers. This has been a huge challenge. I have concluded that, in order to develop relationships with these payers, I must obtain multiple contacts within the organizations. One contact is just not good enough. Cold calls to these organizations certainly serve their purpose, but a more effective way of obtaining this information is to draw on my biggest resource—you! In 2006 I plan to provide you with more opportunities to share with me any contact information that you may have regarding third-party payers, by publishing information on the Web site and in other publications as well as making sure that you are reminded at your district meetings.

In addition to increasing the amount of face time, I must accumulate a higher volume of payers. I admittedly have focused my efforts on the "big fish" in the reimbursement pond, but have unintentionally ignored many other valuable payer sources, such as workers compensation groups and small private insurers. In 2006, I plan to grow my contact database such that it is more representative of all of the payer sources in the state of Virginia. Again, you, the membership, are one of my best sources for information, and I invite you to share with me any resources you may have.

The Payer Relations Specialist position is not only in place to facilitate positive relationships with third-party payers, but is also meant to be a resource for you, the VPTA members. In 2006 you will see more information placed on the Web site relative to specific reimbursement issues, some of which may represent a third-party payer issue that you submitted along with the outcome so that your colleagues may benefit from your experience.

As always, you are encouraged to communicate any issues you may have with insurers to your district chair so that it can be shared with the appropriate persons on the Payer Relations Committee, and hopefully successfully resolved.

Of course there are many goals and logical strategies running through my head as I look to what needs to be done in 2006; space limitations will not allow me to list them all. I feel this is a good start and representative of what will best serve the needs of the Association. If you want to become more involved in VPTA, but find time a limiting factor, take a few moments to submit a reimbursement issue to your district chair. If your organization has frequent contacts with individuals within various third-party payer organizations, share their names and contact information directly with the Reimbursement Committee cochairs, Becky Smith (besmith@hcr-manorcare.com) and Benson Howard (ameliaphysicaltherapy@att.net), or with me (angelabrooks@comcast.net). The small amount of time that your information submission will cost pales in comparison to the potential benefit that it can offer to our Association.

Here's to a successful 2006!

*Angela S Brooks, PT
VPTA Payer Relations Specialist*

The Pediatric Special-Interest Group

The Pediatric Special-Interest Group (PSIG) held its Annual Business Meeting and Dodi Driscoll Roundtable on October 21, 2005, at the VPTA Annual Conference. The meeting featured a panel discussion on the "III Step—Linking Movement Science With Intervention" conference that was held in July 2005 in Utah. Thank you to all who shared your valuable knowledge and information from this conference with the group.

Officer elections were held during the business meeting, and Karen Chipok was elected vice president. The positions of Secretary, Central District Representative, and Blue Ridge District Representative are vacant at this time. Please contact Julie DoBias-Guy at dobiasguy@yahoo.com if you are interested in serving as a PSIG officer.

The Tidewater District PSIG has been very active. Recent meetings featured presentations such as "NDT/Baby Handling Techniques" and "Case Studies: Video Analysis and Discussion."

The PSIG Web site continues to be updated on a regular basis with announcements and information related to our group and pediatric physical therapy. If you have any information/announcements you'd like to add to the site, please contact the PSIG chair at the e-mail address above.

*Julie DoBias-Guy, PT
PSIG Chair*

Clinical Residency and Fellowship Workshop

Rita Wong, PT, EdD, was one of three speakers at a preconference workshop presented at APTA's 2006 Combined Sections Meeting (CSM) in San Diego in February. The workshop, entitled "Clinical Residency/Fellowship 101: Getting Started and Doing It Well," provided representatives of 25 different practice settings with the information they needed to prepare an application to become a credentialed postprofessional clinical residency or fellowship. These postprofessional mentored learning opportunities are defined by APTA as follows:

Residency: *A planned program of postprofessional clinical and didactic education that is designed to advance significantly the physical therapist's preparation as a provider of patient care services in a defined area of clinical practice.*

Fellowship: *A postprofessional, funded, and planned learning experience in a focused area of physical therapist clinical practice, education, or research (not infrequently postdoctoral, post-residency prepared, or board-certified physical therapists).*

Wong just completed a 3-year term as a member of the APTA Postprofessional Clinical Residency and Fellowship

Committee. This committee is responsible for approving postprofessional residencies and fellowships that meet APTA established criteria. Wong also serves on the APTA Section on Geriatrics task force on postprofessional clinical residencies in geriatric physical therapy. This task force aims to foster the development of clinical residencies in geriatrics. Currently, the majority of residencies are in orthopedics; the majority of fellowships are in manual therapy. There are no credentialed clinical residencies or fellowships in Virginia. Anyone interested in learning more about how to start postprofessional clinical residencies and fellowships—or how to locate an existing residency or fellowship—should start by reviewing the APTA Web site. (From the APTA home page, click on "Education," then on "Clinical Residency/Fellowships.")

Dianne Jewell, PT, PhD, CCS, who teaches in the physical therapy program at Virginia Commonwealth University, currently serves as the chair of the Clinical Residency and Fellowship Committee. Both Rita Wong (rwong@marymount.edu) and Dianne Jewell (dvjewell@vcu.edu) are happy to answer your questions about the process of becoming a credentialed residency or fellowship.

Northern Virginia Community College PTA Student News

Northern Virginia Community College physical therapist assistant (PTA) students sponsored a day-long bus trip to New York City in December. Students were impressed with the fascinating preserved human specimens they saw in "Bodies: The Exhibition." The controversial health education exhibit featured polymer-preserved and rubberized whole bodies and organ specimens from the People's Republic of China.

Closer to home, the senior class was recently given a tour of APTA headquarters in Alexandria. APTA opened its doors to the future PTA graduates, going to great lengths to explain to the class what the Association is all about. The new home of the PTA education program, the Medical Education Campus in Springfield, hosted a health care job fair in January. As part of the preparation process for entering the real world of physical therapy, the students brought in resumés and received some exposure to what area physical therapy facilities have to offer. Prior to leaving campus for the final spring clinical affiliations, the second-year class will team up with the first-year class to conduct a Walking Fitness Seminar for the campus staff, students, and faculty. The campus is also looking forward to the first-year students' Annual Massage Day.

*Mike Harrigan, SPTA
NVCC Class of 2006 Co-President*



NVCC second-year PTA students Lillian Davalos, In Jung Lim, Mike Harrigan, and Waseem Arshad participate in the annual PTA Student Cultural Diversity Luncheon.

Marymount Faculty Present Research at APTA 2006 Combined Sections Meeting

At the APTA 2006 Combined Sections Meeting (CSM) in San Diego, three Marymount PT faculty members reported on recently completed research projects. Each of these projects represents a faculty-student research team with the faculty member serving as primary advisor to students engaging in research activity to meet thesis project requirements. Both students and faculty are acknowledged for their important roles in these research projects. These presentations were:

Cathy Elrod, PT, PhD, presented a poster entitled "Identification of the Key Components of Car Transfers in Individuals with Dementia." Student investigators for this project included Bianca Bass, PT, DPT, and Kevin Colvin, PT, DPT, class of 2005.

Julie Ries, PT, MA, GCS, gave a platform presentation entitled "Pediatric Constraint-Induced Therapy for Management of Impaired Upper-Extremity Function in a Young Girl With Congenital Hemiparesis: A Case Report." Student investigators for this project included Jennifer Carter, SPT, Gavin Cribb, SPT, and Duncan Gerhard, SPT, class of 2006. These students traveled to San Diego to attend the presentation.

Diana Venskus, PT, PhD, presented a poster entitled "A Quantitative Description of Muscle Activity at the Scapulothoracic Interface and Glenohumeral Joint During Performance of the CKQUEST, Measured by EMG." This presentation aggregated the findings of two separate student thesis



Marymount University Class of 2006 physical therapist students attend APTA's 2006 Combined Sections Meeting in San Diego, California. Left to right: Duncan Gerhard, Jennifer Carter, and Gavin Cribb. The students collaborated on research presented by Diana Venskus, PT, PhD.

projects: Breck Bowman, PT, MSPT, Carlos Garcia-Cuesta, PT, MSPT, and Manish Singh, PT, MSPT, class of 2003; and Roosevelt Collier, PT, DPT, Tim Czarnecki, PT, DPT, and Karen MacDougall, PT, DPT, class of 2005.



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