

## Summary of 2015 HOD Motions Affecting the PTA

It's August and you may be wondering, "What happened at the House of Delegates Meeting of the APTA in June?" If you recall, last August the APTA announced that RC 11-14 was passed which requested that the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) create a plan for increasing the value of APTA membership for the physical therapist assistant (PTA) and present the plan to the 2015 House of Delegates (HOD) by 21 December 2014. The Board of Directors (BOD) reviewed a number of potential motions for the House of Delegates to consider. In the end, three motions were brought forward through the process for the House of Delegates to consider this June. Excitement was high last year surrounding conversations about increasing the value of the PTA membership. Unfortunately, that excitement was not enough to bring about any significant changes. Not much has been published about the results so here is a summary of what happened.

It is important to note that the three motions brought forth by the BOD would require a change to the current APTA by-laws. In order for changes to the by-laws to be approved, each motion had to pass by a 2/3 majority vote. That meant that the "yes" votes had to meet a critical threshold in number, not just be "one more than the no votes" in order to pass the motion. As a result, only one of the motions passed. Here are the motions with a summary of action:

**1) RC3-15 AMEND: BYLAWS OF THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION TO GRANT COMPONENTS THE OPTION OF AMENDING THEIR BYLAWS TO PROVIDE A FULL VOTE FOR PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT MEMBERS - Passed**

Proposed change will allow states to grant PTAs a full vote at the component level. This means that if a component (State) adopts this through their respective by law changes, a PTA will have a full vote in business matters pertaining to that component. For most states, voting is used to determine chapter leadership (President, VP, HOD delegates)

*(\* The second half of "Part 1" Livestream found at <http://www.apta.org/Livestream/> can be viewed for actual discussion on this motion.)*

**2) RC4-15 AMEND: BYLAWS OF THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION TO PROVIDE CHAPTERS THE OPTION OF AMENDING THEIR BYLAWS TO ENABLE PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT MEMBERS TO SERVE AS CHAPTER DELEGATES - Failed**

Proposed change will allow states to choose a PTA as a chapter delegate to the HOD. This means that a PTA would represent a state and get to vote at the HOD on all the motions brought forth.

*(\*The majority of "Part 2" Livestream found at <http://www.apta.org/Livestream/> can be viewed for actual discussion on this motion.)*

**3) RC 7-15 AMEND: BYLAWS OF THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION TO GRANT PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT MEMBERS THE PRIVILEGE TO SERVE ON THE APTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS.- Failed**

Proposed change will allow a PTA to serve in a NON-OFFICER position on the APTA Board of Directors.

One other motion that failed had an indirect positive result for PTAs. (If you can call keeping the opportunity you currently have a positive result).

**RC 5-15 AMEND: BYLAWS OF THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION TO ALLOW SECTIONS TO VOTE IN THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES.- *Failed***

Proposed change will allow sections of the APTA, such as the Education Section, Geriatric Section, Acute Care Section, etc...to have a vote at the HOD. The motion, had it passed would have negatively affected the PTA. Currently a PTA can be a section delegate since they are a “non-voting member of the HOD”. If sections became a voting member, only those qualified to vote at the HOD would be eligible to be a delegate= PTs. This motion, by failing, allows the opportunity to remain for PTA involvement in the HOD as section delegates.

*(\*Discussion on this motion is at the end of “Part 2” and beginning of “Part 3” found at <http://www.apta.org/Livestream/>)*

A number of other motions were considered as well and at the end of the day, the votes were cast in such a way that there was not a lot of change to the current structure or operation of the HOD. For those who were optimistic about a “year of change”, the results were disappointing. [You can read a full summary of all the motions by clicking here.](#)

So what does all this mean for the PTA? There were a couple of “highlights” in listening to the HOD livestream. One thing to note was that there was an overall positive response to the motions considered regarding the PTA. Unfortunately, the “affirmative” votes did not meet the critical threshold of 2/3 of the vote, even though they were the majority (more yes votes than no votes). A number of PTs spoke in favor of PTAs and the value they bring to the profession, including the student section. The future PTs expressed respect and a desire for inclusion for the PTAs. Maybe the future will be brighter as the students of today become leaders of tomorrow and bring that perspective with them? A second highlight was that the BOD still expressed a commitment to increasing the value of the PTA membership. Details were not given but initiatives may have to center on offering more resources for the PTA since efforts to include PTAs in decision making and governance were defeated.

To end on a personal note, as a PT who values the PTA, I am disappointed. I am not willing to wait for the future and someone else to “try again” to bring about change. I commit to do what I can today to help the PTAs of the world. This website is one way. My co-workers and I will continue to work to bring you resources, updates, information and opportunities to improve your job and life. Please don’t hesitate to contact us with requests for information. If we cannot provide it, we will try hard to connect you with someone who can.

Summary written with respect by Shari Berry, DPT.