

Hello Region 4:

I have just returned from one of the most exciting and **REVOLUTIONARY** annual meetings ever. The enthusiasm of the attendees was amazing, and the decisions that came out of the House of Delegates can only be described as groundbreaking. Here is an update on what you might have missed:

House of Delegates

For weeks leading up to the HOD there was discussion taking place on the forum, the HOD listserv, and the "Getting to Yes" webinars. I believe this is part of the reason for such great success this year. We ironed out the details ahead of time so that when we met face-to-face, we were able to work through a very long agenda to its completion.

The HOD approved changing the name of the Association and the new name is the **Association for Integrity of Healthcare Documentation (AIHD)**. The final step will be to run a trademark check on this name to make sure no one else has it. It could take up to a year to fully implement the new name, but we are well on our way.

The HOD also approved opening up our membership by collapsing the Associate category of membership into the Practitioner category. We now have a new all-inclusive category of membership called **Individual Professional**. This will allow anyone working in the field of healthcare documentation to join our association as a full-fledged member, complete with voting privileges and the ability to hold office.

The other category that was approved is a new **Electronic Membership**. The House approved a price of \$75 for this new membership category and the benefits will include a subscription to Vitals and discounts on credentialing exams and conferences. They will not receive JAAMT, Plexus, product discounts, or full access to our website. They can hold committee positions and offices at the local/state level, but will not be eligible to run for the HOD or the Board of Directors. The idea is to allow people to "sample" the Association and provide us with a new base to whom we can promote full membership.

The House approved amending the bylaws to allow members to run for the Board of Directors after only one year of membership, rather than 3 consecutive years.

The HOD approved the concept of a joint venture with AHIMA - an **LLC** [Limited liability Corporation] that will serve as a "think tank" for industry issues and standards. We are only in the *conceptual* phase of this project now. No money is being spent, no contracts are being signed. We are simply *exploring* the idea.

The HOD approved formation of a **Leadership Institute** to help educate new leaders and people interested in becoming leaders. Keep your eyes and ears open for more information on this as it becomes available.

Finally, the HOD looked at two models of restructuring - a regional approach that would expand the number of directors on the BOD and eliminate the House, and a retooling of the current structure. The HOD approved the **retooling document**, which clearly outlines the roles between the Board and the House. The House is now charged with the responsibility of supporting and strengthening grassroots efforts, while the Board will be solely focused on the industry at large. Pat Forbis, a past president and past employee of AAMT and the current president of California, gave an excellent description of this structure. She said when she wants her voice to be heard within the components of the Association, she will talk to her delegates. When she wants her voice to be heard outside of the Association and to the industry at large, she will talk to the Board. This is a tremendously powerful structure, in my opinion, because it truly focuses the two groups on specific responsibilities and helps to eliminate the "them vs. us" mentality that has plagued the Association for years. It is the epitome of teamwork! Under this new structure, delegates will be required to serve on committees and to communicate more frequently with their members. States will also be required to contribute to an "HOD operating fund." An implementation team has been started and they will be ironing out the details.

It was truly a revolutionary meeting of the House of Delegates. It was only fitting that we have such an amazing day on our 20th anniversary of the House!

Speakers at ACE

There were fantastic speakers throughout the meeting especially the keynote speaker on Thursday, Ed Barlow, who validated everything the Association is doing right now to remain relevant and build a future for our members. Did you know that the baby boomer generation has more people in it than generation X and Y put together? As the boomers approach retirement age and start putting serious pressure on the healthcare system, we are going to feel the impact of a shortage in our workforce like never before. Simply put, there aren't enough new people coming into the industry to fulfill the demands that will be placed on us by the baby boomer generation. Barlow talked about the need for us to attract a younger workforce - preferably getting into the high schools NOW. He also reiterated the importance of using technology to automate as much of our jobs as possible in order to streamline the process and get as much work out of the least amount of people. I heard this sentiment echoed in speaker after speaker. This fed nicely into the wonderful surprise we had set up for our members on Saturday - the debut of our project with Interfix.

Interfix Sneak Preview

On Saturday morning, we opened up the ballroom in the style of a movie theater - complete with popcorn and soft drinks and the Board of Directors acting as ushers with flashlights - to preview the new AAMT/Interfix project that was mentioned earlier this year in a press release. The project is an all-inclusive workstation for MTs, students, and MTSOs that will enable us to work more efficiently. It will truly put the world of MT right at your fingertips. This platform includes

up-to-the-minute updates of new terminology that will automatically be added into your integrated spellchecker and dictionary. If an MT in Michigan calls the Help Desk with a new term, it will be researched, verified, and then sent out to the masses via this new REVOLUTIONARY platform. It is being called "aaMT One" and will include a word processing program, text expander, electronic references and spellchecker (in collaboration with Stedmans), the ability to do QA, offer feedback, etc. It is all being done in a format that is universally accepted so you don't have to worry about whether or not the reports will upload to a facility. The first version should be available in about 60 days. There is discussion underway about tying availability of this product to membership in the Association - which means if you want it, you have to belong. That sure puts all of you at an advantage! Exciting stuff!!

Mad Hatter's Tea Party

The conference wrapped up with an amazing tea party in the grand ballroom. Attendees wore tea party clothes and hats in a variety of styles. There was a contest for silliest hat, most creative hat, and most sophisticated hat. Winners were chosen by members of the New England Association. In addition, we recognized our first "Advocate of the Year" - Carol Croft - for all of her hard work in the state of Pennsylvania on behalf of MTs. Employer of the Year was announced at a luncheon earlier in the week, and the honors went to Wedmedx. The Marilyn Craddock Student Essay winner was Martha Knight, and she was also recognized at the tea party. Finally, the AAMT Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award was given to John H. Dirckx, who has steadily supported this Association for over 25 years by writing columns for JAAMT as well as producing textbooks that have become vital to how we do our jobs. He wasn't able to attend the meeting so the presentation was videotaped and will be sent to him along with his award.

Spacial thanks to April Martin, who hosted a wonderful get-together for the Michigan members as well as for her board partner states. A good time was had by all.

Change is Everything!

The theme for next year's meeting in Reno is "*Change is Everything.*" You've heard

" what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas" but "what happens in Reno, changes everything!" I hope you will start making your plans to attend next year's ACE in Reno, Nevada. I can only see things getting more and more exciting as we head into a very bright future.

Pictures and Updates

Jay Vance has graciously put up a spot on the forums where you can view some photos from the meeting and read comments from other attendees. I hope you will take the time to see what your friends and colleagues had to say about this

groundbreaking meeting by visiting <http://www.aamt.org/forum/viewforum.php?f=92>

Board of Directors Elections

The polls are now open for the 2007 Board of Directors. Be sure to exercise your right to vote by going on the forums and reading what the candidates have to say about the hot issues facing our industry - and then vote for the candidates of your choice!! You can vote online by visiting <https://secure.vote-now.com/elections/org/AAMT/> - or if you prefer a paper ballot please contact the AAMT office and they will send you one.

Many thanks to everyone who made this meeting such a success, especially our fantastic AAMT staff.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. I am here to help you - and together, we will build an Association that will truly help to transform healthcare documentation in the 21st century.

Please share this update with others and PLEASE send me the e-mail addresses I may not have. I am trying to update my list with every board partner update report.

Betty Honkonen, CMT, FAAMT
2006 AAMT Treasurer
Region 4 Board Partner
[Lead, follow, or get out of the way \[Thomas Paine\]](#)