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NYSSMA Today

NEW YORK STATE SOCIETY OF MEDICAL
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Affiliate of American Association of Medical Assistants
(AAMA)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Message.....	2
Letter From the Editor	3
AAMA Nat'l Recap	4-5
Comm. College.....	6-7

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Welcome to what I hope will be an awesome autumn, having concluded a sensational summer!

I recently enjoyed the privilege of attending the 63rd AAMA annual Conference hosted by the North Carolina Society at the **Sheraton Greensboro Four Seasons & Koury Convention Center** in Greensboro, North Carolina a few weeks ago representing NYSSMA as its President and First Delegate to the House of Delegates. In addition to attending the Delegation, I attended the Welcome party, State Leaders sessions, and participated in the President’s Luncheon & Parade of Presidents. I was also able to attend a few education sessions and earn CEUs. Next year, the **2020 AAMA annual Conference** will be hosted by the **Florida Society of Medical Assistants** at the **Hilton Orlando - Lake Buena Vista** September 11–14, 2020 in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. Please check the AAMA website for more information and conference materials as they become available; I hope to see you there.

I am truly blessed to be part of a professional organization that provides a venue for education, participation in conducting the business of the association, and meeting, networking and forming friendships with so many wonderful people from across the country—I encourage all of our members to capitalize on such opportunities. It has been through these experiences that I have come to appreciate the camaraderie of the many friendships I have forged through my involvement in the AAMA, NYSSMA and my local chapter. These interactions have transformed life-long learning into life-long friendships.



With our AAMA conference behind us and **Medical Assistants Recognition Week** ahead of us, I want to remind everyone that “**Medical Assistants are at the Heart of Healthcare,**” and represent the **Gold Standard of Patient Safety and Quality Care** in our communities. **We make a difference.**

Medical Assistants Recognition Week is celebrated during the **third full week in October** (October 21-25 this year) and in my community SUNY Erie Community College is celebrating with a student-led presentation by Kirsten Furness entitled, **Scholarships and Honors Program** to second and third semester students on Wednesday, and to first semester students on Friday. Additionally, a sheet cake will be ordered from the Culinary Arts program for students to enjoy on **Medical Assistants Recognition Day** October 23 and healthy snacks of apples and bottled water will be provided by faculty member Laurie Dentinger on Friday. Staff member Sharon Interdonato will coordinate a week-long contest with prizes and, assisted by student Melanie Seidel, will provide festive decorations along the Medical Assisting corridor. Complimentary celebration and promotional items will also be available to students from AAMA. A heartfelt thank you is extended to everyone who contributed to commemorate Medical Assisting Recognition week this year!

Sincere appreciation is also extended to Heather Kazmierczak for assuming the duties of Editor of **NYSSMA Today** this year and to Lisa McKeen, our webmaster and **NYSSMA Website** Committee Chair. Both of these women are doing an extraordinary job at these tasks. Please utilize these vehicles of communication to our members and look for **2020 NYSSMA Convention** information in the near future.

I wish you all the best of health and good cheer this fall and throughout your winter celebrations, and as always, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Warm regards to all,

B. David Sylvia, BBA, CMA (AAMA)
NYSSMA President



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello, Fall!

I hope everyone had a great summer and has transitioned well into autumn and all that brings with it.



When I was in school to become a Medical Assistant I completed my practicum at a fairly large OB/GYN office. Immediately following graduation and certification I began working at that office full-time and since then the practice has grown immensely and I have thrived professionally. In addition to daily tasks in an office of 14 providers, I am often responsible for training new staff, temps, and...a Medical Assisting student!

This has me reflecting on the many ways in which life often comes full circle. One of the things that this MA student needs is my patience. She also needs guidance, advice, trust, and confidence. She has been spending the last two years learning the objective skills needed to do the job and I know these will come easy for her. The qualities I just named that often cannot be measured are going to be equally important and yet sometimes more difficult to find.

Though I am training her, I find myself in a similar situation in other professional roles, one of which being your greenest editor. I pride myself on being a lover of learning so I approach this as just another hurdle.

This being my second issue of *NYSSMA Today* there are certainly some things I would like to tweak, but overall the feedback I've received from the new format has been overwhelmingly positive! Like all things in life, practice makes perfect and in the meantime I hope that if there is anything my more tenured NYSSMA colleagues would like to see included you reach out to me.

Happy Reading,

Heather Kazmierczak, BFA, CMA (AAMA)

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**A First-Timer's View of the AAMA
National Conference**

By Laurie Dentinger

In mid-September I had an opportunity to attend the National AAMA Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina for the first time. And what a great event it was! I am a Medical Assisting faculty member at SUNY Erie and was able to travel courtesy of a grant designated to help enhance our program and support our students. One of the reasons that I chose to attend this national conference over others in the field of education was the relevance of the workshop topics to the courses that I teach. I spent two full days listening to keynote speakers, participating in workshops – and yes, I do mean participating. I interacted with other educators, shared ideas, solved problems, laughed, and even found myself moved to tears during a Hospice and Grieving workshop.

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solved problems, laughed, and even found
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I took notes during sessions, condensed and typed up my notes, then organized the content into a binder for future use. During my first week back to work after the conference, I implemented some of the material that I learned related to palliative care into my Professionalism course. I gained valuable insights to be added to my cultural sensitivity and therapeutic communication skills topics to be integrated into my Medical Administrative Practice course. The workshop presenters were so enthusiastic and willing to share their knowledge with their captive audience; we were permitted to take photos of their presentation materials, ask questions, and in some cases were even given handouts of their entire presentation!

Although the main purpose for me to travel to the North Carolina conference was to attend workshops related to

my course load; I was thrilled to find myself amongst the company of more than 700 attendees from all over the country, smiling, laughing, and genuinely excited to take part in the event. I quickly realized that being a “first timer” was pretty commonplace at this conference – it was standing room only at the First Timer’s Breakfast Reception which kicked off at 7:30 am! I was also pleasantly surprised to attend a keynote address that not only provided strategies to be a better teacher and communicator, but strategies to be a better person, wife, mother, daughter, and sister. I receive weekly emails from our keynote speaker, Rich Schlentz, and look forward to reading his inspirational messages each time they appear in my inbox. Next semester, I will definitely integrate some of Rich’s wise words into my coursework to help encourage my students – especially during stressful times throughout the semester.

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The AAMA National Conference was an excellent experience for this “first timer”. The conference participants came from varied backgrounds from all over the country – educators, current students, medical assistants, administrators, retirees, etc. Every person that I introduced myself to provided an opportunity to share insights and build a professional network. If you have ever been wondering, if it is worth it to find the funding to attend the AAMA National Conference.....the answer is a resounding yes!



CMA (AAMA) Recertification Policy

Change to Take Effect
January 1, 2020

Effective 1/1/20, an individual whose credential has been expired for more than 90 days forfeits the right to reactivate the CMA credential by the continuing education method and must sit for the CMA (AAMA) Certification Exam.

Candidates are allowed three (3) attempts to sit for and pass the exam. If the candidate does not pass on the third attempt, he/she is no longer eligible for the exam or to recertify the credential. Payment of \$50 reactivation fee plus the current exam fee is required. This change is being implemented to better ensure current competence and knowledge and thus better protect patients. For more information, go to www.aama-ntl.org or call 800-228-2262.



Why We Need to Stop Bad-Mouthing Community College

By Rachel Garlinghouse

I was a senior in high school when I made the decision to attend a community college after graduation.

While many of my peers were applying to universities like Duke and Purdue, proudly wearing their college sweatshirts to school, I was interviewing for a second job and filling out scholarship applications.

I was among the top 10% of my graduating class, but I didn't excel in any early-2000's up-and-coming fields like computer science or medicine. I was a book nerd with zero athletic ability who participated in school plays and wrote newspaper articles.

My choice to attend a community college was purely financial. If I worked two jobs, I could pay the tuition and book fees without taking out any loans. I would continue to live at home with my parents and siblings and make the thirty-minute commute Monday through Friday.

According to a recent study, my decision was a wise one. Researchers found that students who transfer from community colleges to select universities are the most likely group to graduate.

I experienced many benefits from being a community college student. The classes were small and intimate. The building and equipment were modern. My teachers knew every student by name. If I missed a class, my instructors noticed and checked in with me.



I graduated with my associate's degree in English from the community college and moved to a university where I earned a bachelor's in English with a minor in speech communication. From there, I eased into graduate school, teaching my first classes, and graduating with a master's in Teaching of Writing.

The university is where my community college experience came full circle.

I spent nine years teaching composition to college freshman and

sophomores. I had been taught the importance of the teacher-student relationship from my community college experiences, and I made sure to learn my students' faces and names.

I also made it a priority to get to class early and stay late, making myself available to students. Every day, I'd have a line of students waiting afterward. Some just wanted to show me a paragraph they'd revised in their paper or ask a question about the syllabus.

But then there were the others.

Students confessed that their parents had chosen their school and major for them, either to follow in mom or dad's footsteps or because their future career would hopefully be lucrative. They were resentful and downtrodden.

Other students were hemorrhaging dollars on classes they were failing. It wasn't that they were lazy or unintelligent. Rather, they weren't adequately prepared for the jump from high school to college. The demands were too great, and the expectations were too high.

We forget that many college students are eighteen-year-olds caught between childhood and adulthood. Heck, their brains aren't fully developed until age twenty-five, yet they're supposed to know what they want to be when they grow up, commit to that, and not screw up. Oh yes, and magically know how to be a perfect college student.

I had heart-to-hearts with my students. I could empathize with their struggles. There were moments I straddled my role as a teacher and my heart as a mom. I gently asked some of my struggling students, "Have you considered transferring to a community college?"

Some snarled, "Like a junior college?" Others looked defeated and shared that their parents, who were funding their education, would never allow that. One student told me, "My dad would kill me if he knew I was failing my accounting classes." But his dad would not grant him permission, or the dollars, to attend a "junior" college.

I knew that some of my students would be so much better off at a community college, excelling because they would be in a smaller, personal environment that offers students baby steps to success. But how could students combat the "joke" of community college, popularly mocked by the sitcom *Community* and longstanding stereotypes, and convince their parents?

I wish I could have talked to the students' parents and shared my thoughts. There is nothing wrong with a two-year degree. A technical job can yield a large payoff. On the other hand, if the university grad can find a job in their field after graduation, they aren't necessarily rolling in the dough.

In the United States, there are more than 44,000,000 borrowers who together have 1.5 trillion in education debt. The average student has \$30,000 in debt. It doesn't take a genius to realize that's a big chunk of change.

Money isn't everything, though. I would also tell parents, if a student gets discouraged at the very beginning of their university career, plummeting into a pit of failure, it's really hard to get out. For some students, attending a community college prior to transferring to a university makes sense, easing them into deeper waters.

Not all that glitters is gold. It's time to give community colleges the credit they deserve.

"The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you."

B.B. King

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GET INVOLVED

Rub Elbows | Connect with colleagues at local and state programs and events. Meet a mentor for lunch. And, once you get home, shoot off a quick e-mail to the people you've met or heard speak at a session. Build lasting professional friendships.

Boost Your Job Leads | At least 60 percent of all jobs are found through networking, according to About.com. As a member of the AAMA, you'll meet other medical assistants who are working in the field. Talk to them. Let them know if you're looking for employment opportunities.

<https://www.aama-ntl.org/membership/benefits>

JUST FOR FUN...

If at Birth You Don't Succeed: My Adventures with Disaster and Destiny By Zach Anner

Comedian Zach Anner opens his frank and devilishly funny book, *If at Birth You Don't Succeed*, with an admission: he botched his own birth. Two months early, underweight and under-prepared for life, he entered the world with cerebral palsy and an uncertain future. So how did this hairless mole-rat of a boy blossom into a viral internet sensation who's hosted two travel shows, impressed Oprah, driven the Mars Rover, and inspired a John Mayer song? (It wasn't "Your Body is a Wonderland.")

If at Birth You Don't Succeed is a hilariously irreverent and heartfelt memoir about finding your passion and your path even when it's paved with epic misadventure. This is the unlikely but not unlucky story of a man who couldn't safely open a bag of Skittles, but still became a fitness guru with fans around the world. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll fall in love with the Olive Garden all over again, and learn why cerebral palsy is, definitively, "the sexiest of the palsies."

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0140NXY28/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btcr=1

