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American Academy of Physicians Assistants

2120 L STREET, N.W. THE GELMAN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20037

July 23, 1975

DONALD W. FISHER, Ph.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORGlen Wheeling, P.A.
President, AASA
56 Heritage Hills
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401

Dear Glen:

It was nice to talk with you by phone recently, especially given the significant amount of time devoted to the problems and concerns of surgical assistants at our recent Board Meeting in Washington. As you are well aware, the Academy has within its membership many surgical assistants and I can assure you the Academy will speak much more articulately for surgical assistants in the future. We continue to oppose "fragmentation" through the development of specialty organizations, feeling that much more can be accomplished with unity rather than division.

The Academy has gone on record as being supportive of generic accreditation and certification of physician's assistants. We have always been supportive of "generic certification" through the development of appropriate National Board exams administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician's Assistants. As you know, the National Commission should certify all physician's assistants, yet has to date developed only one specialty examination -- an examination in primary care. The Academy supports allowing surgical assistants to take the primary care examination, realizing many are eligible to take such an examination and believe that most surgical assistants could pass the primary care examination. We believe the National Commission in conjunction with the National Board of Medical Examiners, must be responsible for the development of a "core examination" for all physician's assistants upon which specialty evaluations in primary care, surgery, etc. could be performed. Likewise, the Academy has for several years supported the concept of generic accreditation believing that all physician's assistant programs of one sort or another must contain a basic core of information relative to practice.

Several movements are underway. A special ad hoc committee has been formed by the Academy to study certification of the surgical assistant with Craig Ilk as Chairman and various surgical assistants as committee members. I have discussed this issue with Craig Ilk and he will soon be in touch with you regarding the action being taken by the special ad hoc committee. As a point of information, Craig can be reached at the following address:

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Craig Ilk, P.A.
Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic
3811 O'Hara Street
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15261
(412)624-2000

In addition, I will be asking the Academy members on the Joint Review Committee for the Assistant to the Primary Care Physician to review current accreditation mechanisms in primary care and surgery. And finally, as you and I have discussed, I would like to see the AASA and the AAPA merge. It is a reality that the American Academy of Physicians' Assistants has been and will remain the spokesman for physician's assistants in the United States. We have been directly involved in the submission of health manpower legislation, the submission of legislation regarding reimbursement of P.A. services, and have indeed become quite active politically. If you and your colleagues have as your primary objective the advancement of the surgical assistant in American medicine and the health and well-being of individual surgical assistants in mind, I believe you should support a merger of the two organizations. The Academy is sincerely interested in advancing the "physician's assistant in surgery" and we would welcome input by you and your colleagues. I shall do my best to remain in close communication with you and if, in the meantime, I can be of further assistance, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. Godkins, President
American Academy of Physicians' Assistants

TRG/dm

cc: Donald Fisher, Ph.D.
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