



THE OBSERVER

President's Message

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As the newest President of your 2015 TMAA, I'm psyched! In fact, when I consider the plans we have for the coming years, that is a MAJOR understatement! Make no mistake changes are ahead for TMAA and the future is BRIGHT! Our dues are still just \$60.00 for the year! How awesome is that? And, yes, I just renewed mine too.

Members of the TMAA Board met in Houston last weekend at the proposed site of our 2015 TMAA Fall Convention. Between unbelievable food, shopping to die for, and wonderful trainings—all I can say is you've GOT to be there! We all love business-write-off trips when they are spent with TMAA friends and presentations that you know will be awesome.

You spoke and we listened! Our topics are always interesting but we are striving for presentations to educate and enrich us all. Be sure to read The Observer as we will be posting more information as plans are firmed up.

I know Carolyn Rich, my mentor from way back in the early 1990s, would be so proud of everything TMAA has accomplished. Our path as auditing professionals is ever changing. But just like changes to the larger medical field, challenges in auditing is not a bad thing. Changes are opportunities. Remember the times when there was no teamwork? When internal and external auditors were two armed camps? But really uncomfortable situations led to communication and even to community.

We've come a LONG way and we've only just begun!!

We will be updating the TMAA website with our newest newsletter, (www.TMAA.INFO) so be sure and check that website regularly. We will also have a strong Facebook presence—coming soon!

So, please read The Observer for all the latest news.

Linda Hutchinson, RN, CMAS

President



Nominations Committee



TMAA NEEDS YOU!

“Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.” -Henry Ford

When I came across the above quote it became clear to me that this is how we can achieve our goals for 2015. Specifically to build on the excellent work TMAA has done and make our association even better. We have all come together as professionals, nurses, educators, patient advocates, and leaders to achieve this goal.

But there is one thing missing: **YOU!** We need you. Membership is just the first step. Just as we need members to encourage others to join TMAA, we need talented members to fill vacant positions on the board.

We need your enthusiasm, your ideas, and your voice for TMAA to advance as a professional association. As a board member you develop leadership and team building skills, acquire knowledge and shape our activities. Of course it also looks good on your resume.

You might think you have nothing to offer. Being new on the board myself, I also had insecurities about what I could contribute. Other members quickly put my doubts to rest and encouraged me with their full support. And I want to assure you, your experiences and dedication is what makes this association worthwhile.

As a board member you will work with a wonderful group of committed professionals with the same goal: make TMAA great. If you enjoy being a member of this organization, please consider contributing to this enlightening and rewarding group.

Working together, we can ensure TMAA success.

Lupita Flores, RN
Nominations Committee



A Word from the Vice President

I am often asked, “Just what do you do?” Almost as often, I have heard “*Anybody* can be trained to count.” The statement seems like an oversimplification at best and an insult at worst, but it is also an opportunity to introduce someone to our field.

We represent a core group of professional audit specialists many of whom hold national certification. Our skill sets from so many different specialties, of course, separates us from “anybody” as much as our license (and in many cases) our advanced degrees. Nursing experiences, as invaluable as our compassion, informs our decisions. Our experience as nurses drives us to give each case and patient the full benefit of an accurate bill.

Most of us came from the clinical setting. We have worked in large medical centers as well as small regional hospitals. Families look to us for answers when they are overwhelmed by illness, injury, and the healthcare process. We are the ones who assure the families—with both professionalism and human touch—that everything was done to care for their parent, sibling, child, or spouse.

We bring that fertile field of knowledge and compassion with us when we tally our count. External Auditors collaborate with the Internal Auditors over questions. Each brings a career of experience from the O.R. to the E.D. and each question is a chance to improve accuracy, understanding, and ultimately to assure the patient—or their family—of experienced, skilled care and weighted consideration.

As a group we represent the finest in our profession. I am so proud to be associated with each and every one of you. **YOU COUNT!**

Debbie Hewitt, RN, CMAS
Vice President



Comfort Call



Please remember Linda Hempfling, our treasurer in your thoughts, prayers, and meditations. She is recovering at home after a lengthy hospital stay.



Get well soon, Linda!

Compassionate Care

End-of-life care remains a challenge in the medical community. Many of us have faced the challenges our patients and family endure in making difficult decisions while trying to balance clinical needs with stress. Dignity and compassion may be extremely difficult in these circumstances, especially at the end of a long battle with catastrophic illness or injury.

In their article, Tip Kim, Joan Kim, and Kevin Garbenstatter explore Zen Hospice Project, a residential hospice group in San Francisco that is attempting to bridge the gaps of training, finance, and sustainability to develop practice models for end-of-life care.

Click on the link below for the full article.

<http://www.lek.com/our-publications/lek-insights/zen-hospice-project-case-study-adding-contemplative-voice-end-of-life-care>

**Angela Lenox, RN, MHM, CPHQ
Program Chair**



Bylaws and Standards Committee

I attended my first board meeting in February. What a full packed agenda we had! I can't believe so much got accomplished during the few hours we had together. Much of our time was spent making the budget work for 2015. Of course we also worked on planning the conference and all the varied details required to make our event successful. We were able to tour the hotel, identify the appropriate spaces for our activities, and sample the excellent cuisine. We discussed possible topics identifying what is pertinent in our rapidly changing world of healthcare. I was very impressed with all we accomplished as the day really flew by.

I became more aware of our bylaws and understand there are some revisions needed. I will be going through them with a fine-tooth comb, and will update membership with my recommendations in future newsletters. Any suggestions from the membership is welcomed and appreciated.

**Judie Spafford, RN, MSN
Bylaws and Standards Chair**



Chart Check



Ever heard of esophageal spasms?

We are learning about it in my family the HARD way!

Diffuse esophageal spasm, (DES) is one form of esophageal spasm. This is a condition in which uncoordinated contractions of the esophagus occur and food is not propelled effectively to the stomach.

Acid suppression therapy such as proton pump inhibitors are often the first line of treatment. Other medications include nitroglycerine and calcium channel blockers are also used to treat this condition. Botulinum toxin which inhibits acetylcholine release from nerve endings, injected above the lower esophageal sphincter may also be used in the treatment of DES.

Small studies suggest benefit from endoscopic balloon dilation in certain patients. While the treatments work in some sufferers, it does not work for everyone. In fact, all of the cited treatments have a low percentage of success in treating the condition.

Diffuse esophageal spasm causes remain undefined. Current research suggests uncontrolled brain signals running to nerve endings. Additionally, some reports suggest

that very cold or hot beverages may trigger an esophageal spasm and avoidance therapy has proven beneficial for some. The efficacy of avoidance therapy has not been clinically proven. Therefore, in all cases, suppression medication, such as anti-depressants and anti-epileptic medication, is often the first line of treatment.

Tests the auditor will often see billed related to this condition:

- Cardiac testing—to rule out heart disease as a cause
- CT scans
- Upper endoscopy
- Manometry
- Barium swallow

As research continues we can only hope for better understanding and treatment of diffuse esophageal spasm.

Linda Hutchinson, FCLS, CMAS, BS, RN



TMAA's Future Looking Good

Last year at this time, I reached out to TMAA's membership to express concern about the lack of participation on the board or a committee. I am happy to report that our organization is in a much better position this year. We welcomed several first-time board members: Gaye McClellan, Lupita Flores, Angela Lenox, and Judie Spafford.



To stay viable as an organization it is important for TMAA to add new members, but also to encourage involvement in the governance of the association. Ideally, each board should be a mixture of veteran and new members. This promotes the mentoring process and development of leadership skills.

In addition to working on building our membership and mentoring new leaders, TMAA implemented a couple of modern changes last year. The board began meeting more frequently, via teleconference. The old way of doing things was for the board to meet three times per year, and try to cram everything into those few hours. This made for some very long meetings, plus it was expensive. More frequent meetings allow us to meet for shorter periods of time while increasing focus on matters at hand without time and travel constraints.

E-mail blasts, a Facebook page, website, and electronic copies of our newsletter are additional innovations that the organization is using to modernize and improve communications with members.

Do you have an idea for TMAA that you would like to share? We would love to discuss it with you. This is your organization. Your feedback and ideas are very valuable to keeping this organization relevant and healthy. Call me at 210-386-7593, and let's talk!

**Shonna Macaulay, RN, BSN, CCM,
CPHM**
Past President



Membership Memo



It's my pleasure to once again serve as your TMAA membership chair! So, of course, I am here to remind you of your dues for 2015. We are proud to say the rate will remain \$60.00, from January to December, 2015. The application form is enclosed in this newsletter, and on our website at www.tmaa.info.

In February we held our first board meeting of 2015. We balanced the budget for the new year and chose the city and hotel for our fall seminar. Our hunt for the best topics and speakers we can find continues. Once the date is set, members will receive email notice in order to make travel plans and reservations. Your TMAA website will also have 'Save the Date' posted on the home page.

The board also addressed membership and we have exciting plans to add new members but we need your help. TMAA will grant a year's free membership to the member who brings in the most new members. I would be happy to help you recruit, just send me an email—at—with a name, email, and/or home address and I will send out information and invites. dlbraddo@baptisthealthsystem.com.

New folks get the benefit of our organization, present members earn rewards,

and TMAA is enriched with new voices...it's a win/win situation for everyone!

But everything begins with you. Make a pledge to say, "I come first," this year. Start with your profession and with an association committed to excellence. TMAA members are informed of medical news updates, enjoy the support of a group of professionals who know your job duties and can answer most any question you may have. Further, TMAA hosts an annual seminar to network and make new professional connections while earning education certificates—all at very reasonable rates. And as any member who's been can tell you, TMAA seminars are so much more!

Don't delay! Sign up or renew your membership today to receive our quarterly newsletters as well as informative emails addressing events and news within the auditing community. Just return your application to the P.O. Box on the form—and remember to print your email address clearly to insure you receive our updates and newsletter. I look forward to seeing your renewal and you at the 2015 seminar.

Debbie Braddock, RN, CMAS
Membership Coordinator



Audit Break

Update Your Professional Wardrobe



Newsweek

In 1974 Diane Von Furstenberg debut her fashion masterpiece, the wrap dress. More than just another trend, this dress became the cornerstone of her company and a staple in wardrobes around the world. But the wrap dress is even more than that. The wrap dress introduced a world of women to fashion and has held a cult following for over 40 years.

Simple yet elegant, the wrap dress transformed an upstart designer into an institution and transformed a little design house into an empire. But the dress is most important to me as my introduction to a world outside of Port Arthur.

I remember when my mother purchased the vogue pattern. She sketched out a smaller version of the pattern and made a dress for me to match hers. While I continue to enjoy new designs and I look forward to fashion week every year, I always return to my wrap dress.

Comfortable and flattering on any shape, appropriate for any age, the wrap dress is a woman's equivalent of a man's slacks and blazer—casual, professional, and sophisticated. That's what makes it a must-have dress; it is truly suitable for any

occasion, TMAA conference to a night on the town to Sunday service.



Huffington Post.

The DVF wrap dress has been worn by royalty and rock stars. Our beautiful First Lady Michelle Obama has been photographed on several occasions in a DVF wrap dress. Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge often wears wrap dresses as does actress, Susan Sarandon and former editor of The New Yorker, Tina Brown. In an Interview Diane stated that when Madonna wants to be taken seriously she wears DVF. At age 68, fashion's reigning rock star, Ms. Von Furstenberg herself dons one frequently, to fabulous affect.

Thanks to DVF and her iconic dress women around the world became acquainted casual elegance. Thanks to Diane's dress, I've traveled with an eye to the fashion environment. And, I have kept a wrap dress in my wardrobe since that first one my mother cut for me when I was 10.

Gaye McClellan, RN Newsletter



At the Bloomingdale's DVF exhibit, NYC, 2012

Wellness Check



As we welcomed in 2015, many of us set health related goals. Diabetes has always been one of my favorite diseases—because we can DO something about it! Making a few simple changes in our lifestyle now may help us all avoid the serious health complications of diabetes down the road.

When it comes to type 2 diabetes—the most common type of diabetes—prevention is the goal. Diabetes prevention is as basic as eating healthier, becoming more physically active, and losing a few extra pounds. ANYONE can do that! It's never too late to start.

Let's start with exercise! There are many benefits to regular physical activity. Exercise can help you lose weight, lower blood sugar levels, and boost our sensitivity to insulin—which helps keep our blood sugars normal.

How much FIBER do you eat? Did you know that fiber can reduce your risk of developing diabetes by improving your blood sugar control, while lowering your risk of heart disease, and promoting weight loss by helping us feel full? This is a key to diabetes control. Foods high in fiber include fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, nuts, and seeds. I love fruits and veggies, and I drink 1-2 high fiber drinks a day.

Eating whole grains may also reduce our risk of diabetes and help maintain blood sugar levels. It's suggested that we make at least half our grains whole grains. Look for the word "whole" on the package and among the first few items in the ingredient list.

If you're overweight, diabetes prevention may be as simple as weight loss. I know it was for me. Every pound we lose can improve our health, and you may be surprised by how much. Participants in one large study who lost a modest amount of weight—around 7 percent of initial body weight—and exercised regularly reduced the risk of developing diabetes by almost 60 percent! How cool is that?

Low-carb diets, the glycemic index diet, and/or other fad diets may help you lose weight at first, but their effectiveness at preventing diabetes isn't known nor are their long-term effects. And, excluding or strictly limiting a particular food group, you may be giving up essential nutrients. Instead, think variety and portion control as part of an overall healthy-eating plan. A trick that helped me was to start using SMALLER plates! PORTION control and limiting processed carb intake is EVERYTHING!

Linda Hutchinson, FCLS, CMAS, BS, RN



Website News

Meet your 2015 TMAA Board Members on the updated website page! We have a new look, and want to share it with you, so take a peak. You might also want to see if the camera caught your smiling face at the seminar last fall. We had lots of happy people to snap. Our rotating gallery has all the latest photos, so surely we got you once but you'll never know unless you look.

We also have our speaker photos under the "Event Tab." Seeing them may remind you of all the fun and exciting things you learned.

As soon as the seminar date has been locked in we will have a "Save the Date," note posted on the home page so you can make your work and travel arrangements. Our newsletters are also posted here—even previous issues—so if you need information from them, they are always available.

We hope you use the website to attract new auditors to our organization. All the information you need for recruiting is right at your fingertips. Our address is: www.tmaa.info.

You can also find an easy link to AAMAS thru our website home page.

Happy Viewing!

Debbie Braddock, RN, CMAS
Website Coordinator



From the Event Coordinator

A lot of time has been expended into finding the site for the 2015 fall conference. Hotels in Houston, Woodlands, Bastrop, and Sugar Land were contacted. The Woodlands and Bastrop were ruled out due to the lowest room rate—\$189/night and the lowest in the Woodlands was over \$200/night.

We had a board meeting at the Marriott Town Center located in Sugar Land in early February and I think we all liked what we saw. The hotel is great and it is located within walking distance of the First Colony Mall as well as additional shopping venues and many, many restaurants. At this time, I am currently in negotiations with them for October 7th and 8th. The room rate being discussed is \$135/night plus applicable taxes. The one possible downside is the distance from Hobby Airport(28 miles).

With that said, I am sure that we have quite a few Houston members that would be willing to step up and show our hospitality in assisting with transportation to/from the major airports. Stay tuned as we progress with the conference details.

Debbie Moore, RN, CMAS
Event Coordinator



Autism Speaks to Me

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is, as many of you know, a complex neurodevelopment disorder. With a wide range of manifestations, ASD is characterized by social, communication, and behavior-pattern difficulties. Autistic disorder, commonly called autism is the most severe form of ASD.

Children with autism may have problems with communication, social skills, and reacting to the world around them. This disorder may sound daunting—and it is—but with support most individuals with ASD gain a level of function. My son, Edward, is a 27-year-old with autism spectrum disorder. He uses sign language to communicate.

My family works closely with Edward's physician to monitor his medications and behavior-modification programs: traditional speech and language therapy, augmentative devices and behavior programs. Behavior-program management improves his skills in communication through play, social interaction, and self-help development. We make adjustments based on his needs. As a result, Edward is able to function and interact better with the world around him.

Of course, the autism spectrum is just that, a spectrum with a variety of severity levels and there is no cookbook solution to address every case. It is a long and hard road to walk but the reward is great, especially when you can share your experiences with others. I hope you will share our journey. I plan to write further on our experiences and through improved understanding, help others.

Jerry Lee Hubbard, RN, BSN, MHA Nominations



Editor's Notes



Do you have an idea for an article? Is there something you would like covered?

Please contact me: gamezgaye@yahoo.com to share your ideas.

This is your newsletter , let's make it great!

The opinions expressed in The Observer are those of the authors or persons quoted. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the TMAA Board of Directors.

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