



## Corner

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## President's Message

Carol Berger, President AAHP

Academy year 1995 began on Monday, 30 January 1995, in Charleston, South Carolina. It was then that I proudly assumed the office of President of this distinguished organization.

For months in advance of that day, I did not hesitate to share with my colleagues -- many of whom are Certified Health Physicists -- how excited and honored I was. Whenever the opportunity presented itself, I slid in a "not so subtle" hint that I would soon be assuming the office of President of the American Academy of Health Physics. However, in a few too many cases, the response I received went something like:

"How nice. Congratulations. (pause) Uh, what exactly is the American Academy of Health Physics and how does it fit into the American Board of Health Physics and the Health Physics Society?"

Perhaps it's time to review the relationships one more time.

Shortly after it was organized, the Health Physics Society (HPS) studied the need for certifying health physicists. As a result, the American Board of Health Physics (ABHP) was established to develop standards and procedures, examine candidates, issue written proof of certification and recertify CHPs. The ABHP was incorporated in the State of New York in December 1960.

Over the years, the Certification process evolved and expanded into a respected and well-recognized program. However, it soon became obvious that the growing body of CHPs should be active participants in the certification program. Consequently, the American Academy of Health Physics (AAHP) was established and incorporated in Washington, DC, on 17 May 1989.\*

The purposes of the AAHP, which has no corporate or financial relationship with the HPS, are clearly specified in its bylaws. These are:

- To provide an effective means for active CHPs to participate in and contribute to the certification program;

- To elevate and advance the profession of health physics by encouraging its study and improving its practice;
- To encourage and insist on the highest standards of professional ethics and integrity in the practice of health physics;
- To enhance communication between CHPs in those matters of common interest;
- To support the activities of the ABHP in the conduct of the certification and certification renewal process; and
- To provide input of CHPs into the selection of members for the ABHP.

Membership in the AAHP is open to any CHP. In fact, a CHP becomes a member of the AAHP by paying certification maintenance fees and maintaining his or her status as an active CHP.

I am proud and honored to serve as President of the AAHP for 1995 and to be an active player in its operations. The entire Executive Committee, which consists of me, Past-President Bob Casey, President-Elect Ken Kase, Secretary Kathy Pryor, Treasurer Howard Dickson and Directors Frank Massé, Ron Kathren, Scott Medling, Jerry Thomas and Al Tschaeché, is eager to hear from all CHPs so that we can continue to formulate the purpose of the AAHP, better define its mission so that it represents all of its members and work to maintain its high standards of excellence.

As an AAHP member, I hope you will stay informed of what your organization is doing.<sup>†</sup> Better yet, I hope you too will decide to become an active player. The AAHP has a number of exciting initiatives and actions planned for this year, the details of which I will be sharing with you over the coming months.<sup>‡</sup> Please pick one that is of particular interest to you, and let me, any other Executive Committee member or one of your hard-working committee chairs know. You won't be on the sidelines for long. The best way to understand and appreciate the foundation of the AAHP, and the only way to help mold it into an organization that benefits you, is to participate.

\*Shortly thereafter, steps to "de-incorporate the ABHP" were taken and, as of June 1995, the ABHP will no longer be an individual corporation. Instead, it will be a body within the AAHP with the responsibility for defining and carrying out the certification and certification renewal programs for professional health physicists. The AAHP appoints the members of the ABHP from within its ranks and provides funding for the ABHP's activities.

<sup>†</sup>The *CHP News* and the "CHP Corner" are great places to start.

<sup>‡</sup>For example, active efforts are underway to define and solidify procedures for ethics complaints, a mechanism for supplying timely and aggressive response to technical positions is being developed, Bylaw changes to reflect the de-incorporation of the ABHP are soon to be put to the vote, a new investment policy for AAHP funds is being finalized, a package of informational and promotional literature is being drafted and a wide variety of professional development activities such as Standards of Practice and a CHP Specialties Handbook, are being evaluated.

## An Issue of Importance. . .

**I**n the summer of 1993, an individual contacted the Program Director of the AAHP requesting information on how to "re-activate" his certification. A brief search of records revealed that the name given by the individual was, in fact, an inactive CHP.

The individual followed the instructions for reinstatement given to him, paid the maintenance fees, attested to the fact that he had obtained the 64 continuing education credits needed over the most recent four-year period his certification was inactive and confirmed that he was still "actively involved in the profession of health physics." The individual also asked (and paid for) a new plaque, since his original was "lost in a move." However, in that request, he asked that the name on the new plaque be changed to reflect a different middle initial/name than the one contained in the ABHP's records. He was issued a new plaque.

Subsequent events in the summer of 1994 caused the Program Director to question whether the individual who had let his certification status lapse (for whom the ABHP had records) and the individual who requested re-activation and a new plaque were really the same person. The individual was contacted by the Secretariat and it was determined

that he was not the CHP whose certification had lapsed. However, he claimed that he had been certified by the ABHP and that he would provide further information and evidence. In the meantime, the other CHP's status was changed back to inactive. On 20 December 1994, a letter was sent to the individual by the Secretariat asking him to return the plaque and to provide the additional information and evidence of his certification. The individual has not provided the Secretariat with either of these items.

On 14 February 1995, the individual was sent a letter by the President of the AAHP demanding return of the plaque if information to support his certification was not forthcoming. The individual was given a deadline for compliance. If he does not comply within the allotted time period, a copy of that letter, including the individual's name, address and other circumstances surrounding this case, will appear in the next edition of the *CHP News*.

To achieve the status of CHP requires hard work and an impressive combination of education and experience. That is why the credential is so valuable to both practicing health physicists and the companies that employ them. The AAHP takes seriously any unwarranted claims of certification, and will act quickly when such claims are brought to light. You will be hearing more on this issue next month. ■