

# AHMA May 2008 Newsletter



*Healthcare is changing. The world of holistic medicine is changing. The American Holistic Medical Association decided to embrace change!*

*"We are undergoing an internal transformation in order to serve as a catalyst for positive change across the country," says Hal Blatman, Board President. Read his letter below, asking for your support and active participation.*

## Message from the President

Six years ago, I chose to join the AHMA because I believed in holistic medicine. Today I continue my membership, and serve as your president, because I believe in the AHMA community and its collective vision. While each of us physicians began our medical journey by learning identical medical physiologic facts, years of clinical experience have since inspired us to engage in out-of-the box thinking, all the while remaining grounded in sound and safe medical practice.

The AHMA, along with its Board of Trustees, has undergone a significant transition over the past nine months, lifting itself to new levels of outreach and purpose. We have successfully retained a new Executive Director, Donna Nowak, who is committed to our organization's evolu-

tion and prosperity; and our Association is the topic of conversations within the public, academic, and political realms. Our future is bright with possibilities, but your personal participation is needed in order to fulfill this mandate.

First, and most essentially, we need members, the soul of any advocacy organization. Our current medical system is undergoing upheaval and change, and together we must work to promote the principles of holism as a singular solution to our healthcare crisis. The fact is that the stronger our membership, the more significant our voice. You can join as MD/DO, licensable practitioner, or simply as a friend of holistic medicine. With your participation, the AHMA can and will bring healthcare back to the philosophy of personal relationship and care. Without you, our current system will leave no legacy as it continues to collapse.

Second, we need your participation as an advocate for change through active participation and leadership. Current members will soon be asked to vote and ratify a new set of organizational bylaws, ensuring that the AHMA has the foundational security required for continued growth and transition, as well as the trust of health practitioners and the public they serve. We are in need of participation and leadership on a variety of committees, Internet forums, and on the Board itself. I encourage you to volunteer your time and expertise wherever you may find interest, or perhaps ask where you are most needed.

Third, we need your participation at the local level. If we are going to effect change in our healthcare system, we need to invest in our own communities, engage with other holistic practitioners, and share potential solutions to each other's problems. To this end your board is actively working to encourage development of local chapters of our national organization, and opportunity abounds for your input and contribution.

Fourth, and most critical at this time, we need your participation nationally. In addition to committee and board leader-

ship, our 2008 annual conference will mark the turning point of the new AHMA. Your participation is crucial to ensure the bonding of fellowship so essential during transition. Please "save the date" and mark your calendars for the "Embody Nature, Redefine Health" conference at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa on August 13-16. As published on The Integrator Blog and front page of the latest Holistic Primary Care, the AHMA is co-joining with the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) at their annual convention in Phoenix in the spirit of education, collaboration, and most importantly, celebration of our 30th anniversary.

As we move forward together, I ask that each of you continue to help shape our association through personal involvement and feedback. It's springtime, and change is occurring throughout the natural realm. Our students are in need of mentorship; practitioners at all levels need support, education, and community; and both the public and our legislators are in need of credible and nonpartisan information. In this spirit your AHMA will continue to work together with you, as well as with other like-minded organizations, to catalyze those changes necessary to heal our healthcare system.

This is a great time to be part of the American Holistic Medical Association. I look forward to seeing you in August.

Warm regards,  
Hal Blatman

## Welcome New Staff

For decades, AHMA relied on outside management companies to oversee operations. February 2008 was the dawning of a new day as Donna Nowak stepped into the role of Executive Director/CEO. She has a proven track record in business turnarounds and is a holistic practitioner as well—the perfect combination for AHMA at this moment in time. The friendly voice you hear on the phone is that of Shakirra Jones, our new

Administrative Assistant.

Another big change is that AHMA's office moved from Seattle, Washington, to Cleveland, Ohio. We are especially grateful to the Cleveland Clinic Center for Integrative Medicine for donating office space and to Mind-Body-Spirit Connection for contributing office furniture, equipment and other resources.

While the workload is heavy and our staff may be small, their hearts and commitment are HUGE. Welcome aboard!

### AHMA Turns 30

The American Holistic Medical Association (AHMA) was founded in 1978, with the goal of helping transform allopathic/conventional healthcare to a holistic model. We might like to forget what it was like for holistic physicians in the past; some were viewed as quacks, others were ridiculed. Even today, doctors who practice complementary and alternative therapies and promote a holistic approach to wellbeing are misjudged or under attack.

Medical schools don't yet teach the value of prevention and wellness instead of a "quick fix". They focus on treating symptoms with drugs and surgery instead of teaching doctors how to help their patients correct imbalances by addressing contributing factors. AHMA, on the other hand, teaches the importance of integrating all aspects of well-being, including physical, environmental, mental, emotional, spiritual and social health. We have remained true to our mission for 30 years, creating a safe haven for the early pioneers in holistic medicine and serving as an advocate now when collective voices are needed for continued progress.

How does the AHMA increase awareness, understanding and **practice** of the basic tenets of holistic medicine? We:

- Help the public find holistic practitioners through the "Doctor Finder" on our website and help them find answers on our Public Chat Forum
- Help educate physicians regarding the innate healing ability of the body.
- Encourage healthcare providers to assist patients in removing blocks to healing, so true health in mind, body

and spirit can be restored.

- Collaborate with others who share an interest in helping patients make the changes they need to return to true health.
- Cooperate with other organizations who promote complementary, alternative, integrative and holistic medicine

Help us celebrate by attending the annual conference in Phoenix, August 13-16. Want to be a sponsor? Contact Kjersten Gmeiner by email at [gmeiner.k@ghc.org](mailto:gmeiner.k@ghc.org) or by phone 206-901-2359. Want to help with the party planning? Contact David Riley by email at [dsriley@integrativemed.org](mailto:dsriley@integrativemed.org) or by phone at 505-983-0546.

#### COMING SOON to a mailbox near you...

The proposed new AHMA bylaws--along with a ballot for your vote by mail, fax or email--will be coming soon. By unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees, you are being asked to vote "yes".

If you have any questions, please call Executive Director Donna Nowak at (440) 838-1010 or Board President Hal Blatman at (513) 956-3200.

### AHMA Member Benefits

The AHMA is more dedicated than ever to playing a vital role in helping to reshape the practice of medicine in this country. Through your membership, you are part of an integrated community that is committed to maximizing the optimal health of patients, practitioners, and the healthcare system itself. As a member you gain access to the leading experts and finest minds in the healing professions.

Other benefits of AHMA membership include:

- ✓ Discounts on the August conference registration
- ✓ Quarterly AHMA electronic newsletter
- ✓ Online member directory
- ✓ Member forum at [www.holisticmedicine.org](http://www.holisticmedicine.org)
- ✓ Free subscription to *Holistic Primary Care*
- ✓ Free electronic subscription to

*Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine and Integrative Medicine—A Clinician's Journal*

- ✓ Discounts on subscriptions of those journals, as well as *Natural Solutions: Vibrant Health, Balanced Living* (great resource for patients)
- ✓ Online network for job-seekers and employers in medical fields
- ✓ Patient referrals from the publicly-available "Doctor Finder" search feature on our website

### Save the Date, August 13-16 AHMA & AANP Conference

History will be made at the fabulous Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa in Phoenix on August 13-16. Instead of hosting our own convention (truth is that we couldn't afford it), AHMA is joining in at the annual meeting of the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians. This is a bold and exciting move, demonstrating our commitment as holistic practitioners to walk our talk by integrating ourselves!

By now you should have received a "Save-the-Date" postcard for the August event. Special rate of \$115/night is available through July 10 by calling the Arizona Biltmore at 800-950-0086. View conference highlights on our website at [www.holisticmedicine.org](http://www.holisticmedicine.org), or visit AANP's website at [www.naturopathic.org](http://www.naturopathic.org).

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