Are All These Fee Increases Really Necessary?

This past week, I received 2 electronic communications from the Board of Certification (BOC) and Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) that left me wondering—Are all these fee increases really necessary? As Americans continue to grapple with tough economic times and the price of gasoline continues to skyrocket, naturally the cost of doing business must rise. The BOC, CAATE, and other nonprofit organizations are no exception. The profession of athletic training has been spoiled for some time now with terrific services at affordable prices. I contend that despite proposed increases in price, the services will continue.

The BOC provides the following justification for the recertification fee increase on their Web site:

In my opinion, no such justification is needed. The services provided by the BOC that enable certified athletic trainers to perform their duties are laudable, and they will continue to provide the services in the most cost-effective manner possible to the membership. CAATE President, Greg Gardner, EdD, ATC, offered the following in defending the forthcoming accreditation fee hikes:

CAATE is re-evaluating the current fee structure to ascertain if it is in alignment with the nature and quality of accreditation services we want to provide. The fee structure that is currently in place has remained unchanged since the JRC-AT [Joint Review Committee on Athletic Training] left CAAHEP [Commission on the Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs] a number of years ago. Since then we have hired an executive director, developed the Annual Report Committee, the Review Team, and realized a vast increase in the number of people directly involved in our accreditation processes. We have added representatives from the National Athletic Trainers Association [sic] and the Board of Certification in order to become more inclusive in our decision-making process. These initiatives have been wildly successful but, again, a fee increase must be considered if we are to continue to...
improve and refine our delivery of accreditation services.

Again, I say that the importance of such an organization to the ongoing oversight of the educational process for athletic trainers far outweighs any proposed increase in fees for services. Greg Gardner, Sheila Caruthers, and the entire staff at CAATE have been doing a great deal for so little over the years that this proposed fee increase, I am confident, will go a long way to continue improving the accreditation process we now enjoy.

Following a recent visit to the National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA) headquarters in Dallas, Texas, I’ve pondered whether an increase in NATA membership dues is imminent. What I saw there left a lasting impression on me and made me appreciate the hard work and efforts of professional staffers who take great pride in their work despite being understaffed and handling the responsibilities of 2 and sometimes 3 staffers. Traditionally speaking, I’m a fairly conservative guy and always cost conscious, but this is one increase I will not have a hard time justifying. I’m a true believer that the NATA is doing all it can for the betterment of the profession and in the best interest of its members.

So if you’re also wondering whether all these fee increases are necessary, I say yes, they are! The professional and administrative services that each of these nonprofit organizations provide so the profession of athletic training can continue to grow and gain recognition far outweigh the negatives associated with increases in fees. The cost of doing business is rising and so, too, are the costs associated with our professional organizations. Let’s all be supportive as we move forward.

REFERENCES


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