Despite much effort by our professional associations, continuous explanation from our membership, and encouraging the media to use the terms athletic trainer (or athletic therapist in Canada), we continue to struggle with public recognition of what we do, why we do it (ie, our methods, not our work ethic or motivation), and how we know that what we do is the right thing to do. In other words, athletic training, as a profession, is still lacking in public awareness.

Our associations—the National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA) in the United States and the Canadian Athletic Therapists Association (CATA) in Canada—are making efforts to change the public’s lack of knowledge about our profession. Awareness of the profession may increase the demand from potential clients. In fact, it may also expand the list of potential clients. As recognition of athletic training improves, state associations are more successful at working to enhance legislation, which in turn can improve insurance coverage (in some jurisdictions). All these efforts are linked in that insurance coverage for private practice services usually requires some aspect of recognition—in this case, either a physician referral, government legislation, or both. To break this cycle, we need to create a better market demand for our services. If our services were in demand and we had strong state legislation, insurance coverage would more likely be available. Some would argue the reverse—if we had insurance coverage, governments would be more open to improved legislation for athletic training services.

Because of these awareness problems, discussions are evolving about the creation of new levels of certification with expanded or “expertise” areas. Part of the justification for these ideas is due to several of our members seeking additional credentials to make themselves more competitive, or more qualified, for jobs within the athletic training and therapy domain. Our members feel a need to obtain additional credentials that are either recognized or legislated. In turn, these other credentials diminish the ATC or CAT(C) qualification, imposing negative effects on our profession.

We need to improve awareness. Why are you reading about this awareness, marketing, insurance, and extra credentials in this peer-reviewed, scientific journal? It goes back to the beginning—why do we do what we do.

Evidence-based practice has made its way into our clinics and
classrooms. Thus, there is a need for the evidence to reach into mainstream media. We should all do what we can to encourage our master’s students to publish their work. We can encourage some of them to pursue a PhD degree, and we can publish studies from that body of work as well.

Of course, this level of study is not for everyone. But for those with research talent and drive, progressing to this level will contribute to information dissemination, which will ultimately promote the profession. In Canada, we are not as developed as the United States in the pursuit of new information, but we are coming along nicely—more students are enrolled in master’s and PhD programs, and their work is starting to be regularly published.

This issue of *Athletic Training & Sports Health Care* once again features abstracts accepted for presentation at the annual CATA meeting (May 23-25, 2013, Toronto, Ontario, Canada). Some of the abstracts are master’s-based work, whereas others are from higher levels. Some interesting work is being done in a variety of venues, with multiple subjects. Although peer reviewed, these are only abstracts. We should watch for this material to be published in article form, but in the meantime, progression of information is occurring that can have an impact on our roles as athletic trainers and therapists. Information that also provides justification for our practices and, in turn, contributes to the recognition of athletic training and therapy as a legitimate health care profession that is making contributions that other professions can use to learn and improve.

We do not need new levels of certification. We do not need extra credentials. We need to reclaim the tasks and roles of athletic training that we have let move on to other professionals. We need public awareness. From our research and sharing of new ideas, and with justification for our practices, we will teach the world about athletic therapy. Information and awareness are key. Enjoy the ideas brought forth in this issue of *Athletic Training & Sport Health Care*. ■