**BENEFITS OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP**

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Therapists who are members of one’s professional association are aware of all the benefits of this membership. Those who have not joined their association are urged to reconsider this decision. I hope that this will help.

There are many tangible benefits to membership in one’s professional association and these include opportunities to create and expand professional relationships, promote your profession while advancing your career, easily access resources for knowledge of “Best Practice”, and obtain financial discounts and connections with the association’s partners.

All professional associations sponsor national and local conferences as well as local meetings throughout the year. These events provide opportunities for networking with peers, sharing ideas, learning about valuable legislative and clinical news that affect your every- day provision of practice, seeking out or providing mentorship, and being informed about volunteer opportunities in many working association task forces. Volunteering on committees that are dedicated to improving your profession is truly a rewarding means of giving back to the entire collection of individuals who share your commitment to your patients or students.

Associations assist their members in designing and carrying out research studies, providing answers to clinical, administrative, and payment questions. It provides career networking opportunities, as well as providing discounted seminars and training classes.

Associations provide access to current and gold standard research that should be the basis of one’s clinical interventions. Periodic journals, newsletters, and online (current and historical) research are only available to its members. This expansive, vital knowledge base does not compare to the attendance of one or two continuing education courses that address only one or two clinical topics.

Professional associations are continually involved in legislative lobbying efforts that are directed to protect and promote the profession. Perhaps this is the most important role that the association has and this is the role that requires the most support by its members. Legislative leaders look at the number of members represented as one of its criteria for their decisions and voting. In our ever changing health care environment, laws and regulations must be monitored for their impact on the continuing existence of the profession itself. Associations assure that all their members are aware of these changes in order that members practice in accordance with new laws to maintain and protect their licensure.

Annual membership dues generally cost no more than one and one half days pay. This is a minimal cost for the multitude of tangible benefits of membership. The intangible benefits of membership cannot be objectively measured but must be considered as well. Feeling the kinship of being part of a collective with one’s professional peers and the sense of pride in one’s profession is truly priceless.