



A Legacy of Leadership – the APhA House of Delegates

Mr. Secretary, Delegates and Colleagues,

It is an honor to be able to stand before you as your Speaker at the 105th meeting of this House. In this role, I have enjoyed the tremendous opportunities I have had to network and learn from the leaders of our profession and also the interactions I have had with you, the delegates. I look forward to another year of learning and growing together and moving our profession forward.

Have you ever thought about your importance as a delegate to this House? Having served as a delegate for over 20 years, I often leave the annual meeting with a sense of accomplishment that the policies we passed have taken a stand or even changed the direction of the profession. What I didn't realize was that my vote represented about 150 APhA members! That's right! With a membership of more than 63,000 and approximately 400 members in this House, each vote is representative of about 150 APhA members. So, you certainly make a difference by being in that seat!

The theme of this year's annual meeting is "Expanding Opportunities for Patient Care" and the policy topics we have before us definitely align with that theme and move our profession forward. However, before we dive into policy, a little history lesson on the legacy of this House.

- **Recently, we lost former Remington Medalist and the first female Speaker of this House, Mary Lou Anderson. I think it is a fitting tribute that we review her 1970 address to the House of Delegates. She stated the following: "Leaders are called to stand in that lonely place between the no longer and the not yet and intentionally make decisions that will bind, forge, move and create history. We are not called to be popular; we are not called to be safe; we are not called to follow—we are the ones to take risks. We are the ones called to change attitudes, to risk displeasures. We are the ones called to gamble our lives for a better world." I ask that we take a moment to remember Mary Lou and her impact on the profession and health of our nation. (*silent moment*). As you consider and debate the topics before us over the next few days, I ask that you remember her wisdom. Think about the future needs of our patients, our members,**

and our profession. We are “setting the course”, and while that it not always popular, it is CRITICAL and visionary!

- For me, one of those bold steps was the 2011 deliberation and ultimate passage of the Community Pharmacy Accreditation policy, a policy that was certainly not popular when we started. However, through the House process of thoughtfully, deliberately, and thoroughly vetting a policy statement, the policy was adopted by the House and implemented by the APhA Board and we now have CPPA actively accrediting community and specialty pharmacies.
- In 2009, this House passed a policy entitled, “Independent Practice of Pharmacists”, which established the autonomy of appropriately-trained pharmacists to provide patient care and to be paid for those services. This policy was reviewed and retained in 2013, the same year that the APhA Board of Trustees took a bold stand and, at this annual meeting announced a financial investment of \$1.5 million toward our Provider Status initiative.

APhA has proven its leadership of the profession over and over, as the previous examples have shown. Just as Mary Lou Andersen stated over 45 years ago, this House does NOT shy away from the hard subjects, but faces them head on and takes risks. And, what we say matters— it sets the policy direction for the association that is then implemented by our Board of Trustees.

So, as we look to Expanding Opportunities for Patient Care, you will see that your Policy Committee is bringing forth policy statements to ready us for the passage of Provider Status – providing consumers access to, and coverage for, pharmacists’ quality patient care services. As you deliberate, please consider how these policies might stand between the “no longer and not yet” and how they prepare us for the future. The topics of Biologic, Biosimilar and Interchangeable Biologic Drug Products, Point of Care Testing, and Medication Optimization within the Patient Care Process, in addition to the numerous new business items that will be heard, might sometimes be out of our comfort zone or our area of expertise. However, you are moving and creating history! You are representing other pharmacists and student pharmacists who cannot be here, but want to see the profession advance its role in healthcare and serve their communities guided through APhA’s leadership role!

I hope you notice changes that the House has put in place this year based on your feedback. We are listening and will continue to do so, and we want to hear your suggestions. We have ensured a better WiFi connection, the Policy Review Committee revamped their report to, hopefully, make it clearer, and we added the most webinars we have ever had to truly help delegates stay informed and connected as year-long delegates. My goal as your Speaker is to facilitate a policy-making process that is transparent, efficient, and yet facilitates open and candid discussion that yields excellent policy. Policy that, in turn, will be used by our staff and others to change attitudes and make a better world.

A special thank you to the APhA staff for all they do behind the scenes to make this House function the way that it does. They are invaluable and worthy of so much recognition! And, personally, I am so grateful to my husband and kids and also my staff at our pharmacy for their love and support to allow me to hold this position. Finally, as I have learned in a recent Bible Study lesson from Andy Stanley, we must all ask ourselves “What is the wise thing to do in light of our past experiences, our current circumstances, and our future expectations?” as we approach decisions in our lives. I believe that question is fitting for us, as delegates and leaders of the profession, to consider as we embark upon this House session. Let’s continue the Leadership Legacy that has been forged! God bless each of you!

**Theresa Tolle
Speaker, APhA House of Delegates**