American Medical Technologists

Oct 2011–Sept 2012
A Year of Progress
AMT Vision

Our vision is for American Medical Technologists to be acknowledged and recognized by the world as truly being THE premier certification and membership organization for allied health professionals, particularly those in the professions of medical technology, phlebotomy, medical assisting, dental assisting and medical office administration.

AMT Mission

The mission of AMT is to manage, promote, expand upon and continuously improve our certification programs for allied health professionals who work in a variety of disciplines and settings; to administer certification examinations in accordance with the highest standards of accreditation; and to provide continuing education, information, advocacy services and other benefits to our AMT members.
In these tough economic times, it seems almost counterintuitive that AMT should be doing so well. But if you stop and think about it, it makes sense. With unemployment being so high, individuals all over the United States are reinventing themselves in order to survive. For some, it means delaying retirement; for others, it means going back to school to learn a new trade or skill. Whatever the reason, certification seems to play a key role in making these individuals more marketable.

This phenomenon can be illustrated by reviewing the progress AMT has made this past year. Applications for allied health certifications have been received in record numbers. AMT has administered 13% more examinations than in past years and membership has hit the 56,000 mark.

But progress isn’t just measured in numbers. This past year, AMT made significant strides in improving the way we do business with our customers. A clear example is the move to paperless application processing.

AMT now scans all received documents for easy retrieval and greater efficiency. And to serve our customers better, we have centralized all of our communications into one customer service center. That center now handles over 6,000 calls each month.

Resources for our members have been greatly enhanced. With the launch of our education department, AMT now offers an impressive lineup of on-demand courses, webinars and STEP articles to help our members learn and grow professionally. Advocacy also played a key role this year, winning our members key victories on several fronts.

Yes, it has been a good year for AMT. But don’t take my word for it. Read on and find out for yourself how this established organization continues to improve its certification programs and strives to provide the most relevant and timely benefits to its members.

Progress indeed.

Roxann Clifton, MT(AMT), MEd
AMT President 2010-2012
MLT Program Director at Southwestern Oklahoma State University
Sayre, Oklahoma

Progress (noun) movement, as toward a goal; advance; development or growth.
AMT certifies nine different specialty areas. All of AMT’s exam-based programs have in common three key components that are considered the cornerstone of AMT’s certification philosophy—education, experience and examination.

While AMT firmly holds onto this tried-and-true concept, it must also mark progress—to ensure that its certification examinations remain relevant in the workplace and can conform to the latest technological advances.

Keeping Examinations Relevant

This past year, a task analysis project was conducted for the RMA, RDA, RPT, CMAS and CLMA certification disciplines. The project was conducted in collaboration with the Ohio State University Center on Education and Training for Employment. Each of the subject-matter expert committees responsible for the examinations is integrating the findings from the research into the respective examination competencies and blueprints.

As a matter of course, new examination forms were introduced for several of the certification disciplines and new examination forms were prepared for electronic delivery with Pearson VUE’s computer-based test administration channel. Examination forms are updated periodically, on cyclical bases, to ensure that test content is always up-to-date.

Comprehensive test-level and item-level analyses were conducted for every form of an examination administered (both computer-based and paper & pencil) during the prior calendar year. The analyses monitor item performance and quality, and guide subject matter experts in appropriate item revision, pool maintenance, and examination scoring. Examination indices are reported to the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) as a requirement of AMT’s ongoing accreditation.
Changing Processes

During the program year ending September 30, 2012, AMT took in 29,528 applications for certification, 645 more than last year, or a 2.2% increase in new applications. That’s about 100 applications received each working day! To help improve workflow, in September 2012 AMT initiated internal document scanning protocols in which all incoming documents are scanned into PDF images and then attached to the appropriate applicant record in the database. As a result, records are now complete and immediately available for processing.

AMT also administered 17,943 certification examinations in 2011, the most ever administered by AMT in a one-year period. Along with these increasing numbers, AMT continues to move toward its goal of exclusive, computer-based testing. In 2011, 69% of all AMT certification examinations were administered electronically as compared to 62% the previous year. All of AMT’s laboratory-related examinations (MT, MLT, CMLA) are now exclusively computer-based.
As of September 30, 2012, AMT membership increased to 56,456 which is a net gain of 5,692 over last year’s total member count — an increase of 11.2%

AMT members are the lifeblood of the organization. At 56,000 strong, they represent an extremely dedicated group of healthcare professionals with a common goal: improving the care of patients.

It is AMT’s responsibility as a membership organization to provide these hardworking individuals with the most up-to-date programs and services so that they can continue to grow, both as individuals and as a profession. This year, AMT delivered on both fronts.

Education

The education department implemented a Learning Management System (LMS). The new LMS has been integrated into AMT’s database, which allows quiz results to be automatically transferred into a member’s AMTrax record – all for easy tracking and retrieval.

The RMA practice exam was converted to an online tool and in the process was enhanced to mirror the length of the actual RMA certification exam. Adding a large number of questions enabled randomization of the questions so that no two exams are identical.

Seven on-demand courses from leading experts were added to the portfolio of educational offerings this past year. The online portfolio of educational opportunities continues to grow, with over 150 STEP articles, 10 on-demand courses, and three archived webinars.
Advocacy

AMT remained very active during the past 12 months tracking legislative and regulatory issues and advocating on behalf of AMT members on both the national and state levels.

• Federal

This past year has been dominated by issues concerning Health Care Reform, the SGR fix and laboratory fee schedule, physician signature requirements, technical component grandfathering, electronic health records and meaningful use, and FDA and laboratory-developed tests.

AMT continues to work with the Clinical Lab Coalition and with other lab organizations to minimize payment cuts.

AMT was among numerous physician and lab provider groups to file comments supporting the rescission of the CMS rule that would have required an original signature by a physician or licensed non-physician practitioner (NPP) on any written requisition for Medicare lab services.

AMT submitted targeted comments on one aspect of CMS's proposed Stage 2 Electronic Medical Record (EMR) “meaningful use” regulations. The proposed rule specified criteria that eligible professionals, eligible hospitals, and critical access hospitals must meet in order to qualify for Medicare and Medicaid HER incentive payments. In its comments, AMT recommended that the scope of persons authorized to enter orders for medication and for laboratory or radiology services into the Computerized Provider Order Entry (CPOE) system should be expanded to include properly credentialed medical assistants. Previously, only licensed practitioners could enter orders into the CPOE.

Victory was achieved! The CMS final rule accepted the recommendations of the medical assisting community and allows credentialed MAs to enter orders into the CPOE system.

For the fourth consecutive year, AMT joined with other lab organizations in cosponsoring the annual Legislative Symposium and Legislative Day.

• State

AMT continues to be involved with lab licensure issues and other legislation of interest at the state level. This past year, lab licensure bills were introduced in four states (Missouri, Mississippi, Minnesota and South Carolina). We continued to be involved in pre-legislative lab licensure activity in Virginia. AMT was also involved in legislative activity in Louisiana to ensure that AMT members continue to enjoy full recognition under that state’s lab licensure program.

Significant medical assistant legislation was enacted in the State of Washington which will require medical assistants in that state to pass an approved certification examination. All indications are that the RMA(AMT) exam will be approved for that purpose. Also, AMT and its new TriState Society are engaged with the State of Connecticut in developing an expanded lawful scope of practice for medical assistants in that state.

To help AMT better monitor state legislative activities, we contracted with the well-regarded STATENET, a LexisNexis company based in Washington DC, to conduct state legislative and federal monitoring on our behalf.
AMT is poised for heightened progress going forward. The following four areas are noteworthy.

**AMT – Fiscal Health**

AMT is in very sound financial condition. The 2011-2012 AMT fiscal year concluded with AMT having earned a healthy 10.7% of gross income.

The fiduciary duties of AMT’s Board of Directors and the Executive Director ensure the suitable protection of AMT’s financial assets, and its compliance with accepted accounting principles, federal and state laws, and IRS regulations of tax-exempt nonprofit organizations. Along those lines, last fall the Board approved a change in our outside investment firm. The new firm, Bernstein Global Wealth Management, was chosen to help us achieve our goals with regard to the investment of our financial reserves.

**Customer Service**

As our customer base has grown, so has the number of calls and emails to the AMT staff office. Last fall, AMT reorganized its infrastructure and formed a new customer service center. Our office space was redesigned so that call center personnel can interact better with each other. This department of 6 now handles over 6,000 calls each month. That’s 50 phone calls per person per day! Other modalities that this group handles include emails and online chats.
Going Global

AMT continues to expand internationally. We now have members in over 56 countries, ranging from the neighboring Canada to the Philippines in the Far East. To keep in touch with our members and to promote certification services to others, AMT participated in the following activities this past year:

- **Philippines** – The Executive Director and a member went to the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists annual meeting in Manila last December. The trip enhanced AMT’s visibility with existing members, potential new certificants, and schools providing training for future medical technologists.

- **Dubai** – The Executive Director and a Board member represented AMT at the MedLab component of the giant ArabHealth trade show. AMT’s presence there was a success in terms of connecting with the MTs in the region seeking certification, advising members already working there who had questions about renewal or reinstatement, and meeting with officials of licensing boards.

- **CASMET** – We continue to work with our colleagues from the Caribbean. In addition to cosponsoring the annual meeting, AMT representatives regularly attend CASMET meetings and staff is helping them promote their organization to students and potential members.

AMTIE

AMTIE officially changed its name in January 2012, from American Medical Technologists Institute for Education to American Medical Technologists Institute for Excellence. AMTIE now is charged with the administration of scholarships and grants associated with enhancing educational and competency opportunities for current and future allied health care professionals. It currently solicits its members for contributions and will begin soliciting donations from philanthropic organizations, businesses, educational institutions and the healthcare community, with the goal of funding more scholarships and educational grants.

In 2012, AMTIE gave out 7 scholarships, totaling $6,500 and awarded over $2,000 in educational grants/awards.

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“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”

— Henry Ford