Florida Society of Medical Assistants, Inc.

March 1, 2011

To: Deniece Jozefiak, CMA (AAMA)
Speaker of the General Assembly

Agnes Foxall, CMA (AAMA)
Vice Speaker of the General Assembly

Re: Public Policy Annual Report

This chair has seen to the duties of Public Policy as outlined in the Policy/Procedure Manual and the committee continues to monitor the legislation in the state of Florida as well as other sites. This chair continues to communicate with Don Balasa, JD, MBA, Executive Director of AAMA in regards to any Public Policy information regarding FSMA to help keep us updated with any additional issues.

Following the appointment by President Jeanne Von Ohlsen, CMA (AAMA), this officer took the opportunity to establish the committee with additional members; Kathryn Panagiotacos, CMA (AAMA); Mary Lou Allison, CMA-C (AAMA) and Virginia Halligan, CMA (AAMA) as recommended in the FSMA Policies and Procedures Manual.

In October, 2010 a report was written by Donald A. Balasa, JD, MBA, Executive Director and Legal Counsel of the AAMA, stating the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) greatly assisted the American Association of Medical Assistants by changing references in its *Model Nursing Practice Act* and *Model Nursing Administrative Rules* from “certified medication assistant” to “medication assistant-certified.” This was done in response to the AAMA pointing out to the NCSBN that state legislation creating the title of the “certified mediation aide/assistant” was causing confusion between Certified Medical Assistants or CMAs(AAMA) and medication aides/assistants.

In the Tallahassee Legislative Update from February 25, 2011...In its last week of meetings prior to the official start of the 2011Session, the Legislature continued its emphasis on reducing the size of government, as potential cuts were bandied about the halls. Scores of bills were filed in a flurry of activity, and the Senate Criminal Justice Committee debated and passed an amended version of SB 432, the "Physician/NRA

Gun Bill."

The bill stems from a longstanding feud between the National Rifle Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, the latter of which has advocated for a ban on guns in homes in which children reside. As originally drafted, this bill would prohibit a physician from asking a patient if any member of the patient's household owned a firearm and imposed prison terms and fines of up to five million dollars for violations. Confronted with arguments that the bill threatened patient safety (especially in cases of suicidal or homicidal patients), imposed unnecessary regulations on physicians, and was an unconstitutional impingement on free speech, the Committee responded by creating exceptions for psychiatric emergencies and when reporting is required existing law (such as when a physician is confronted with a gunshot victim). The amount of the fine for a first time violation was reduced to $10,000.00.

Among the other bills recently filed:

SB 730: Would require medical clearance before a concussed athlete could return to competition.

HB 833/835: More bills designed to curb the deadly combination of texting and driving.

SB 1968: Would make major revisions to the workers compensation system, including a reduction in what dispensing physicians could charge. Physician professional fees would not be changed.

SB 1200: Would require that stroke victims treated by EMS be directed to specified hospitals best equipped to handle such cases.

This chair and committee encourage every member to be vigilant and report anything that you see or hear that would inhibit the Medical Assistants right to practice or affect their work environment to this committee.

This chair appreciates the opportunity to serve FSMA and would like to thank the committee members for their assistance and their dedication to our organization.

Bonnie R. Chrimes, CMA (AAMA), Chair
Kathryn J. Panagiotacos, CMA (AAMA), Member
Mary Lou Allison, CMA-C (AAMA), Member
Virginia Halligan, CMA (AAMA), Member

Jeanne Von Ohlsen, CMA (AAMA), Ex-officio