

FINAL DRAFT 10/13/04

Dicus 2004

When The Vision Becomes Reality

Thank You

President Anderson, PPS Board of Directors, Awards Committee, Colleagues and Friends.

When Steve called me in September to advise me that the PPS Board had chosen me to receive the 2004 Robert G Dicus Award it certainly came as a complete surprise. Being included among those who have received this honor over the past 25 years and to be thus considered one who has had an impact on the Section's mission is humbling indeed. My thanks go out to all who may have had a role in my selection and I pledge to you that I shall continue to work to uphold this honor you have allowed me to enjoy.

While I am honored today I want to express the fact that I am one part of a great continuum of individuals with whom I have been privileged to serve and work with over the past 25 plus years.

We have worked together both at APTA, the Pennsylvania Chapter and at PPS, to support the interests of the profession and to serve the needs of our members. It is impossible to name individuals as I count so many of my friends and colleagues in this group. You know who you are and what you mean to me.

As I examine the contributions of Bob Dicus I am struck with his vision and his ability to anticipate the needs of tomorrow rather than accepting the status quo and living with the experiences of the past.

From when in the early 1950's he began work with Charles Magistro, Royce Nolan and Jim Mckillip to lay the ground work for what would become the Self Employed Section of APTA to his work in the mid 1970's to form the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Society of America, he placed his focus and energies on the future and made the decisions to take people there.

It is in recognition of this visionary quality of Robert Dicus that I wish to frame my remarks.

I've heard it said that the mark of a leader is their ability to take us where we need to go. Leaders in life, business and practice do not focus on the past but look forward to the future. I hope that my remarks lead all in this room to reject complacency and to choose to focus on the future and it's challenges and opportunities. All of you here are individuals who are in leadership positions not only in our profession, but also in your communities and you can and will make a difference.

I sincerely believe that the Future of the Physical Therapy Profession is brighter than we have seen in perhaps the last decade, but the future is not one that will relive where we have been or even where we are today. The Future is one that will be uniquely changed based on the decisions that we have and will make and the initiatives taken in response to those decisions. We can all help mold the future or stand waiting at the Platform and watch the train pull out of the Station.... and my friends and colleagues that train has begun to move.

The Professions future as we have laid it out will grow from 2 distinct yet parallel paths that when they intersect will place us as Professional and Autonomous Practitioners. It is a destination that as individuals we have long hoped to reach and as an Association we have worked so hard to achieve.

There were many steps we have taken: from assuming control over our own educational programs when we formed our own accrediting body, to moving from the Physician controlled registry that was put aside by state Licensure. However there are many more steps that must be taken and completed before the journey is over.

**Where the profession goes, must also go the Therapists and Practices that make it up
As clinicians we are doomed to a future of unfulfilled expectations and as practice owners relegated to a future as business operators not professionals if we do not embrace and accept these concepts.**

While the path to our future is bold and innovative for us, it has been well worn by those who have traveled it before: Medicine, Dentistry, and Podiatry to name a few.

What frustrates us is our inability as a discipline to have not traveled this road to Professional Practice a generation ago.

Catherine Worthingham in 1960 offered the opinion that:

“Many Physical Therapists are anxious to eliminate any confusion that exists and have physical therapy recognized as a fully professionalized occupation.”

Some 45 years later we might just offer that same comment.

As you may recall, at the 2000 American Physical Therapy Association House of Delegates, the membership approved Vision 2020. I would hope that we all continue to share this vision, and accept the responsibility that is ours to make it a reality. This is a responsibility that takes both effort and energy.

Embodied within the APTA's Vision 2020 are 6 indicators that identify the makings of a doctoring profession and that are the markers along the path that we have chosen to follow.

**These are: We will be Doctors of Physical Therapy,
We will be Autonomous practitioners,**

**We will have direct access,
We will have and use evidence for our practice.
We will become truly Professionalised in our life and Practice and we will be recognized as
practitioners of choice**

Let's examine these indicators more closely

We will be Doctors of Physical Therapy: With the majority of our entry-level curriculums now at the Doctoral level and given the fact that over 80% will be there by 2008 the overwhelming majority of our new graduates will be DPTs by 2010.

How many in this room are Doctors of Physical Therapy.... I ask you to stand.

Thank you ... Please be seated.

Where are the rest of you going to be?

What excuses are you going to make to your clients, your medical colleagues your DPT staff and your self?

We will be Autonomous practitioners:

**Not in the sense of separate and independent from the medical community: a concept that rightfully scares many of us... but in the context as defined by Webster as Self Governing --
- a context of accountability for our decisions and for our patients and clients.**

We will have direct access

**Thanks to many in this room and countless others across the nation we will achieve this goal in Washington as we have already done in so many of our states
We will have and use evidence for our practice.**

I had a unique experience over the past year as I completed my DPT while my youngest son Jeff entered the final Professional year of his entry level PT Curriculum. We found ourselves taking evidence based clinical decision making courses together. He as the soon to be new clinician... myself after 30 plus years of clinical experience. The millennial generation and the Baby Boomer. The generation gap was clearly evident as we progressed through the course when Jeff commented:

Dad I do not understand how you got anyone any better when you started in practice because little that you did was proven to work.

We must through personal commitment and support of our Scholars and Researchers prove that what we do works and ground our practice on effective treatments based on evidence.

These indicators of the vision that I have identified make up one of the 2 parallel paths that I spoke of. When these indicators intersect the other path ... that of professionalism we will know that we have reached our destination. The core values of Professionalism are the foundation of this other path and while personal traits they must also be reflected in the mission and vision of our practices be it a practice of one or of many.

Let's explore these values;

Accountability: I touched on this earlier: we all as practitioners must take control of our own decisions and live by them. No longer can we place blame on the referral source, the payer or on our business ownership model. Obligations and actions of the physical therapist including self-regulation must lead to behaviors that positively influence patient/client outcomes, the profession and the health needs of society.

Altruism: A difficult role for some of us who may often live more in the business than the clinical world of physical therapy. Our primary regard has to be for the interest our of patients and clients, We must assume the fiduciary responsibility of placing the needs of the patient or client ahead of the Physical Therapists self interest or the self interest of the business organization.

Compassion: Isn't this a trait that likely brought us to this great profession. The desire to identify with or sense something of another's experience. The concern, empathy and consideration for the needs and values of others.

Excellence: The Physical Therapy practice that consistently uses current knowledge and theory, that embraces evidence, that integrates judgment with the patient/client perspective, that challenges mediocrity and that works toward attaining the highest clinical skills.

Integrity: The Possession of and steadfast adherence to high moral principles and professional standards. We must be certain to recognize the limits of our expertise and consequently make appropriate referrals to other healthcare practitioners.

Professional Duty: The provision of Optimal care, the involvement in professional activities beyond the practice setting, mentoring our colleagues and taking pride in and promoting Physical Therapy by positively influencing the health of society.

Social Responsibility: Becoming a part of the greater communities within which we live: participation in volunteerism ~ Political activism ~Leadership~

collaboration between other health care practitioners and the public. Accepting and promoting mutual trust between the profession and the larger public that necessitates responding to societal needs for health and wellness.

The Final Benchmark of our success along this path we need to walk is the last aspect of the Vision and it is the defining outcome measure of our success as a clinician, a practice and ultimately as a profession.

The final success will be when Physical Therapists are recognized by both consumers and other health care professionals as the practitioners of choice for the diagnosis of, interventions for and prevention of impairments, functional limitations and disabilities related to movement, function and health.

Achievement of this final Benchmark will validate all that we do and validate that we have successfully walked the path of our vision.

Becoming the practitioners of choice will validate direct access

Becoming the practitioners of choice will recognize the efficacy of our evidence-based practice

Becoming the practitioners of choice will ensure reimbursement of our services

Becoming the practitioners of choice will level the playing field and eradicate the issue of Physician Owned Physical Therapy Services that we have struggled with for over 30 years

Becoming the practitioners of choice will:

Assure that our Vision has become our reality.

I look forward to working with you and our colleagues around the country to achieve that reality

Thanks