



Recruiting for the future

Affiliates show students the way

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THE CORE of membership recruitment lies in the hands of AAMA affiliates. Although the AAMA offers the essential resources (eg, labels, rosters, statistics and marketing materials) to chapters and state societies, nothing works better than the personal contact that local chapters and state societies can give. Personal contact is especially crucial at the student level, according to recruitment EXCEL Award winners Minnesota, Nevada and Mississippi.

Reach out early

What students don't know can hurt them. Rebecca Feist, CMA, president of the Minnesota Society of Medical Assistants, and Karen McLaughlin, CMA, president of the Nevada Society of Medical Assistants, both believe that visiting their local medical assisting programs influenced an increase in membership. "I think what I'm doing at the student level stays with students, so that once they're working in the field, they realize, 'Hey, the AAMA is important' and make it a priority to join," says McLaughlin.

Feist stresses the importance of timing. "I catch them right before

they go on externship, otherwise they may leave never knowing about us." Feist walks students through packets of information, such as AAMA marketing materials and past *PMA*s or *CMA Today*s. She also gives students mug coolers with the Minnesota Society's logo printed on them.

High-five for hands-on marketing

Sometimes the most successful marketing involves hands-on tactics. State conventions prove this point. The experience is like sampling a piece of cheese at the supermarket. You can assume you'll like it from what the salesperson is telling you, but you won't know for sure until you taste it.

Paige Key, CMA, XRT, president of the Mississippi Society of Medical Assistants agrees. "By coming to our convention, students are more apt to join," Key says. "Convention gives them the chance to network with current members and see what benefits we have to offer." Last year, Mississippi held fundraisers that brought in enough money for several students to attend its convention for free.

Similarly, Feist entices students to attend Minnesota's convention with discounted fees. "Once students are at convention, they get a

great feel for how we work. It's a perfect time for us to explain the importance of graduating from accredited schools, and all the benefits of becoming a member."

Educators play key role

Educators are students' main source of information regarding the medical assisting field, and therefore are the perfect promoters of AAMA membership. When asked how their states increased membership, Feist, McLaughlin and Key all placed educators at the forefront.

One prime example is Chrissy King, CMA, medical assisting program director at Hinds Community College in Pearl, Miss. King promotes the AAMA from the start. "When students are enrolling in the program, I talk about the CMA credential. And when they get into their first semester, I immediately hit them with the AAMA."

King believes the more informed her students are about the AAMA, the more likely they are to join. As an incentive to get involved, King offers her students extra credit for attending local meetings. She also brings her experiences from all levels of the association into the classroom. "I'm constantly explaining what happens at different meetings to my students to give them a feel for the association." ▀