May 28, 2009

To: SSWLHC Chapter Presidents

From: SSWLHC National Chapter Task Force and SSWLHC Board of Directors

Re: Unification Update

First, we want to convey a sincere thank you to those who attended the SSWLHC Chapter Presidents' Meeting and Conference in New Orleans last month. For those who could not attend, your presence was missed. The task force and board have spent the last month working through your input and modifying the draft plans that were reviewed at the meeting. We heard your feedback and our intentions are to implement the best possible plan for both our members and our local/national Society.

In summary, we heard three major concerns regarding the draft plans: 1) the rebates to chapters initially discussed would not be adequate to support chapter activities, 2) the Affiliation Agreement did not spell out sanctions for non-adherence to the agreement, and 3) will current national members be required to pay both chapter and national dues in Year 1 of plan and how much rebate will go back to the chapter. Of course there was other rich discussion and debate as chapters weighed the benefits and drawbacks of affiliation. This respectful dialogue will help refine our next steps and keep us mindful that we may not have all the answers right now, but we will get there through a transitional process.

On another note, the Board recently made an unrelated but significant decision regarding the Society's fiscal calendar that will have an impact on the unification process. Due to holding the annual conference in the fall beginning in 2010, the Board voted to change the Society's fiscal year to begin on July 1st and end June 30th. As with most associations, the primary revenue source for the Society results from the conference. The Board carefully weighed both the decision to change the conference date and fiscal year, and strongly believes that holding a fall conference will help accommodate many vendors who have conflicting obligations with other health care conferences that are held within weeks of the Society's spring conference. As you may already know, the financial support of vendors is key in supporting the conference and many other programs sponsored by the Society throughout the year.

The change in our fiscal calendar will result in a modification to the unification timeline, and in particular, the date that we will begin collecting membership

dues. Attached is a ***Revised Timeline*** to reflect the fiscal calendar change along with a ***Revised Chapter Affiliation Agreement*** and an ***Affiliation Flowchart*** to help visualize the steps required for affiliation. As indicated during the Chapter Presidents' Meeting, the Affiliation Agreement has an initial term that can serve as a "trial period" for chapters that are uncertain about a long-term affiliation. This Agreement is also a "working document" that can be adjusted through feedback and experience prior to submitting a renewal package to chapters in 2011.

We appreciate your patience as we move forward with the unification process. If it has not yet been said, your leadership role within your Chapter and the larger Society is valued and key to our success. This demonstration model of a local/national partnership is the exact vision for what can be accomplished through unification in advocacy and professional representation around the issues that matter most to our clients and health care social work practice.

Feel free to contact us at info@sswlhc.org. Thank you!