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THE MAKING OF NAHCHA

*By line Beth Hentzen*

The Nebraska State Association of Home Health Agencies came into being in June of 1971 after several years of persistent persuasion by Emily Brickley. Emily (then Director of Public Health Nursing at the State Health Department) had been calling together the five existing Home Health Agencies twice a year to discuss issues relevant to home care. Those five Home Health Agencies included Omaha Visiting Nurses Association, Tabitha Home Health Services of Lincoln, Menonite Beatrice Home Health Services, Scottsbluff Home Health Services, and St. Frances Home Health Services of Grand Island.

The Nebraska State Association of Home Health Agencies was formally organized on June 29, 1971 at Menonite Deaconess Home and Hospital in Beatrice, NE. By-laws, which were developed by Shirley DeMott and Emily Brickley, were adopted. Officers were elected as follows: President-Martha Maseman, Tabitha Home Health Services; Vice President-Peter Apostol, Omaha VNA; Secretary-Treasurer-Carolyn Peters, Home Health Services of Beatrice; Directors-Sr. Martha Timothy of St. Francis Home Health and Shirley DeMott of Scottsbluff Home Health.

The five initial Home Health Agencies covered nine counties fully and two counties partially. By June of 1973 there were eleven Home Health Agencies in the Association. New members included Mary Lanning Hospital Home Health Services of Hastings, Lutheran Home Health Services in Norfolk, Community Home Health Services in Cozad, Phelps County Home Health Services of Holdrege, Good Samaritan Home Health in Kearney and Jennie Melham Home Health in Broken Bow.

In six short months the Association had four more members: Burt-Washington Home Health Care of Blair, York General Hospital Home Health,

Warren Memorial Hospital Home Health Agency in Friend and Scared Heart Home Health Care of Yankton, S.D. Today, there are 29 Home Health Agencies in the Association with home care services available to almost all counties in Nebraska. Associate members and individual members have always been a part of the organization. The 1984 membership includes 14 Associate members and 14 Individual members.

The dues for membership in 1971 were as follows: \$25/Agency membership, \$15/Associate membership, and \$5/Individual membership. Currently the dues are: .001% of patient revenues with a minimum of \$100 and a maximum of \$500/Agency membership, \$55/Associate membership, and \$15/Individual membership.

Emily Brickley was appointed as Parliamentarian on June 18, 1975 and three months later was appointed Historian also. Emily and Hulda Osborn have been honorary members since 1976-77. Eva Phelps is the only other honorary member and she was bestowed the honor on June 23, 1977.

The Nebraska State Association of Home Health Agencies changed its name to the Nebraska Association of Home and Community Health Agencies (NAHCHA for short) at the September 28, 1977 meeting in York, NE. It was felt that this title more accurately reflected the philosophy of the organization.

NAHCHA has been an active member of the National Association since 1972. Shirley DeMott was a member of the National Association of Home Health Agencies' Board in 1971 and gave a report at the organizational meeting. She urged Home Health Agencies to write and contact their legislative officials regarding health issues pertinent to home health. Shirley is still active in legislative issues serving as co-chairperson for the legislative committee.

NAHCHA began having workshops in January 1978 in conjunction with the quarterly meetings. These workshops have been geared to home care issues and have covered a wide variety of topics.

The leaders and members of NAHCHA have strive~~d~~ to promote and uphold high standards for professionals and the care given to persons in the communities served. These goals are evidenced by the growth in membership and dedication of it's members.