November 1, 2019

Dear Valued Members of the ADTA:

We are writing with some important updates. We encourage you to take the time to read this letter carefully and invite you to reach out to any of us with your questions.

At the business meeting during the conference, President Margaret Migliorati shared that, for the past several years, the Board has been examining different options for continuity of operations of the ADTA upon Operations Director Gloria Farrow’s retirement in November after 34 years of service. As we look to the future, we have also come to recognize our growing need for additional professional expertise in strategic planning, marketing and social media, fundraising, external relations, and legislative advocacy in order to continue to advance our profession. Furthermore, over the past several years, the volunteer board has experienced a significant increase in workload that has become difficult to sustain. Finally, as mentioned at the business meeting, the costs of maintaining the ADTA’s current operations are increasing at a greater rate than our revenue.

Given these challenges, the Board, as the elected governing and fiduciary body of the ADTA, undertook the necessary and difficult steps for charting a path forward. We sought the expertise of consultants from Maryland Nonprofits as well as from longtime ADTA consultant Peter Norlin, who helped us to identify and evaluate multiple leadership and operations models to meet the ADTA’s current needs as well as to help us grow into our next 50 years. The Board initially hoped to hire a full-time or part-time executive director with specialized expertise to help us achieve our strategic initiatives and grow services for our members. However, as reported at last year’s business meeting, we determined this was not currently financially viable. The Board has carefully evaluated, with the input of our consultants, other models including: sharing an executive director with another organization, hiring short term executive leadership, maintaining in-house operations, hiring specialized contractors and outsourcing some or all of operations. As part of this process, we began detailed research into association management companies (AMCs) and learned of the benefits this model may provide to the ADTA. The Board elicited referrals, spoke with six AMCs and sought proposals from three as part of our inquiry into this model.

Following two years of intensive research, expert consultation, extensive consideration, and thoughtful evaluation and deliberation, the Board recently voted unanimously to contract with Capitol Hill Management Services (CHMS), an association management company, to take over ADTA operations. We believe that partnering with CMHS at this critical time in the ADTA’s evolution is an important step towards increasing our reach and influence as a profession.

The Board understands that this is a significant change, one that will bring adjustment and one that means we will have to say goodbye to our staff. We weighed this extremely carefully in making our decision. Ultimately, the Board’s research revealed that the needs of the ADTA have grown as we enter our 55th year as an organization, and that the staffing levels and expertise needed to maintain and grow the ADTA were not financially feasible if we maintained in-house operations.
CHMS has significant experience and proven results in all facets of administration and non-profit management, including with our colleagues at the North American Drama Association. CHMS will provide an Operations Director who will report directly to the ADTA president while also providing an elite team of association professionals, equipped to manage areas such as membership recruitment and retention; financials; meetings, conferences, and events; committees, special interest groups, and volunteer support; publications; marketing, communications, and public relations; website, newsletters, and social media; Board management and onboarding of new members; as well as continuing education, approval and certification.

It is important to understand that the ADTA Board of Directors maintains full authority and control over our finances and absolutely all decision making related to every aspect of operations. The business expertise and labor reside with the CHMS team, allowing the Board to more fully utilize our content expertise, so that together we can achieve a shared goal of further growing and strengthening the organization. CHMS also has a proven commitment to and experience with diversity, equity, and inclusion issues - a priority for the Board in making this decision.

It is anticipated that this change will yield a cost savings in the long run (starting in year 2), allowing the ADTA to more readily manifest goals as set forth in Vision 2021, and help us strategically plan for a vibrant future. At the end of our two-year contract, we will assess and evaluate whether or not we want to renew with CHMS. We will continue to listen to you, our membership, to help inform this decision. Please reach out to any Board member with any current questions as well as feedback over these next two years regarding changes that you notice. Consider such things as member cost and benefits, user experience of the website, responsiveness from CHMS, webinar and continuing education opportunities, and your conference experience.

We anticipate CMHS will take over operations on December 1, 2019 and will be in touch soon with more details. Be assured the Board of Directors will labor diligently to make this transition as seamless as possible. We look forward to working for and with you as we embark on this next phase of our development as an organization.

Sincerely,

Margaret Migliorati, President
president@adta.org

Paul Sevett, President Elect
presidentelect@adta.org

Ambria Cunningham, Secretary
secretary@adta.org

Jacelyn Biondo, Treasurer
treasurer@adta.org

Charné Furcron, Multicultural and Diversity
diversity@adta.org
Joan Wittig, Standards & Ethics  
ethics@adta.org

Jessica Young, Education  
education@adta.org

Danielle Fitzpatrick, Approval  
approval@adta.org

Kristin Pollock, Government Affairs  
governmentaffairs@adta.org

Jennifer Tantia, Research & Practice  
researchandpractice@adta.org

Angie Yemma, Public Relations  
publicrelations@adta.org

Dawn Morningstar, Eastern MAL  
easternmal@adta.org

Pam Margules, Central MAL  
centralmal@adta.org

Marybeth Weinstock, Western MAL  
westernmal@adta.org