

Adapted Physical Education Advocacy and the Role of the NCPEID

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Abstract

Advocacy has been central to the advancement of the adapted physical education (APE) profession in the United States; and the National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPEID) has been the primary professional organization dedicated to advocating for APE. Over the past five decades, NCPEID has influenced legislative initiatives and professional development in APE. This paper provides a historical perspective on these activities and sheds light on current issues facing the profession. It also highlights the need to understand prior struggles as well as achievements in order to effectively continue to advance the APE profession.

Keywords: *NCPEID; Adapted Physical Education; Advocacy; Physical Education; History*

According to the Alliance for Justice, advocacy is “any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends or pleads on the behalf of others” (2008). While advocacy activities may take different forms such as organizing supporters, educating legislators, conducting and disseminating research, educating the public, and so on; all advocacy involves supporting an issue or cause. Specific to adapted physical education, one organization has consistently advocated for the rights of individuals with disabilities to have access to quality physical activity programming across their lifespan—the National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPEID; hereafter referred to as the Consortium).

The Consortium, founded in 1975, is the only professional organization that has continuously held an advocacy presence in the fields of Adapted Physical Education (APE) and Therapeutic Recreation (TR) for persons with disabilities over the last 50 years. According to Sherrill (1988), the purpose of the organization was “to promote, stimulate, encourage, and conduct professional preparation and research in physical education and recreation for individuals with

handicapping conditions” (p. 72). The founders of the organization identified three main purposes for the Consortium, which were to: (a) support grant writing for personnel preparation, (b) provide input to the federal government concerning rules, regulations, and laws, and (c) generate knowledge base for APE and TR through research and demonstration (Johnson, 1986). Simply stated and supported in all of the literature about the organization, the Consortium is an advocacy organization (Bundschu, 1986; Johnson, 1986; Sherrill, 1988).

Through the years, the Consortium has shifted priorities in response to changes in leadership, membership, and the evolution of the adapted physical education and therapeutic recreation professional disciplines (e.g., Sullivan & Piletic, 2019). In addition to internal influences, changes in the Consortium’s activities have been reflective of societal occurrences (e.g., passage of PL 108-446, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004). Those changes notwithstanding, across the past 50 years, the organization has consistently advocated for physical activity for individuals with disabilities. As the founding and early Consortium members retire from the organization and young professionals take over the reins, it is important to reflect on how the organization has evolved and also document the Consortium’s history.

History of the Consortium

Early Legislation and National Trends Leading to the Establishment of the Consortium

The creation of the Consortium, originally named the National Consortium of Physical Education and Recreation for the Handicapped (NCPERH), was precipitated by several key pieces of legislation and the resulting impact (see Table 1). Amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1966 created the Bureau for the Education for the Handicapped (BEH), which developed into the US Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and directed federal dollars and efforts toward strengthening and coordinating educational activities on behalf of students with disabilities (Auxter et al., 2001). Of relevance to the development of the NCPERH, were the efforts of the BEH to support the professional preparation of personnel to serve individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the passage of legislation during the same time frame authorized grants to institutions of higher education for personnel preparation and research in physical education for individuals with disabilities (e.g., P.L. 90-170 Title V, P.L. 91-230, P.L. 93-380). Early universities pioneering development of personnel preparation programs, many of whom received funding from the above-named legislation even prior to the passage of PL 94-142, are illustrated in Table 2 (Sherrill & DePauw, 1997). The scholars leading these APE programs

played a critical role in the advancement of the field as well as the development of the Consortium, such as Claudine Sherrill, Joseph Winnick, Janet Wessel, David Auxter, and Lane Goodwin (for additional information on the history of professional preparation in APE see Winnick, 1986).

As a result of the aforementioned legislative mandates, professionals recognized a need for an organization that was focused on personnel preparation and physical education service delivery for individuals with disabilities. Early professional organizations, including the Consortium, played an important role in assisting physical educators and recreation therapists in providing services to children and youth with appropriate services (Johnson, 1986) and continue to play a key role as

mainstream [professional] organizations typically give only token attention and acceptance to individuals who are considerably different from the norm. This low prioritization has required networking of experts whose main research, teaching and service delivery interests center[ed] on specific individual and ecosystem differences and interactions. (Sherrill & DePauw, 1997, pp. 86)

Establishment of the Consortium

In the late 1960s, professionals in the field APE and TR programs identified a need for an organization to advocate for personnel preparation and service delivery in physical education and recreation for individuals with disabilities (Johnson, 1986; Sherrill, 1988). Additionally, the APE and TR professionals agreed that the organization should be actively involved in legislative advocacy and serve as a catalyst for continual enhancement of the profession (Johnson, 1986). This momentum continued to build and was formalized in the 1970s with the formation of the Consortium.

According to various sources (Johnson, 1986; Sherrill, 1988; Sherrill & DePauw, 1997), it was an informal meeting in 1972 at the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation Convention in Houston, TX, where Lou Bowers and Bill Hillman organized and publicized a symposium for BEH training grant directors to be held at the 1973 annual convention of American Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD). This symposium was to identify and discuss issues in APE and TR personnel training. For this reason, Bowers and Hillman have been recognized as the founding fathers of the Consortium. The symposium at the 1973 annual convention of AAHPERD resulted in the development of a National Ad-Hoc Committee that functioned from 1973 to 1975 and eventually founded the Consortium as NCPERH. This National Ad-Hoc Committee served two primary purposes: (1) to improve APE and TR service delivery and personnel training through meaningful research, and (2) advocate for APE

and TR services, including lobbying to members of Congress and the BEH (now OSEP).

To this end, the founders established within the organization's constitution (and now bylaws), that the overarching purpose of the organization was "to promote, stimulate, encourage, and conduct professional preparation and research in physical education and recreation for individuals with handicapping conditions" (Porretta, 2016). Further, the founders emphasized that the Consortium should serve to: (a) support writing for the personnel preparation grants, (b) provide input to the federal government concerning rules, regulations and laws, and (c) generate the knowledge base for APE and TR through research and demonstration (Sherrill, 1988). To achieve these purposes, annual consortium meetings were hosted with early documents indicating that the meetings focused on (a) advocacy with congressional leaders to increase support for physical education and recreation for children and youth with disabilities, and (b) identification and discussion regarding issues of personnel training (e.g., Sherrill, 1988; NCPERH Annual Meeting Minutes, 1978). These early meetings also reflected the early and persistent connection to federal legislation and governmental departments.

Another factor that led to the fulfillment of the 1967 Ad-Hoc committee direction was the fact 15 colleges and universities were awarded \$20,000 by the BEH to develop a model of professional preparation programs for APE and TR. Discussions among these directors who received funding for personnel preparation training programs from the federal government resulted in them becoming the charter members of NCPERH (Sherrill, 1988; see Table 3). The first official meeting of NCPERH was held in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1975 (Sherrill, 1988). There were eight board members who held the following roles: (a) President, (b) President Elect, (c) Secretary, (d) Treasurer, (e) two physical education representatives, and (f) two recreation representatives. The intent of this article is to share how the organization has grown over the years, including the (a) evolution of the organization's name, (b) links to legislation surrounding adapted physical education, (c) defining and preparing the adapted physical education specialist, (d) development of professionals involved in professional preparation, and (e) support of and research within adapted physical activity.

Evolution of the Organization's Name

The original constitution for the Consortium, founded as NCPERH, was written by Joseph Winnick and Don Hawkins and approved by the board at the annual meeting in 1976 (Sherrill, 1988). It was at that time that the organization was recognized by the federal government as non for profit (Sherrill, 1988). The Consortium (then known as NCPERID) Bylaws were revised in 1997, 2006, 2009, 2013, (See Table 4) and most recently in 2019. These amendments to the bylaws, overseen by Consortium Presidents, often resulted in chang-

Table 1
Key Legislation Impacting the Creation of the Consortium

Year	Legislation	Impact
1965	PL 89-10: Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)	Landmark education legislation comprised of five titles focused on improving public school education, including innovative programs for students with disabilities (e.g., physical education programs).
1966	PL 89-750: 1966 Amendments/Title VI of ESEA	Referred to as Title VI of ESEA, this legislation established the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, which is today the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and provided assistance in the education of children with disabilities including authorization of grants to states to begin and/or improve educational programs, including those in physical education.
1967	PL 90-170: The Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act	In addition to the construction of research centers and training facilities relating to mental retardation, construction and establishment of community mental health centers, and research on the education of children with disabilities, PL 90-170 authorized personnel training in physical education and recreation for individuals with disabilities under the preveue of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (now OSEP).
1970	PL 91-230: The Education of the Handicapped Act	As the precursor to PL 94-142, PL 91-230 repealed Title VI of ESEA and consolidated multiple separate Federal grant programs focused on developing educational programs for children with disabilities under one statute.
1974	PL 93-380: The Education Amendments of 1974	Established two laws - the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1974, and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Further, PL 93-380 extended and increased the Federal spending for education for children with disabilities set forth in PL 91-230. PL 93-380 also provided instructions for due process procedures and addressed the concept of least restrictive environment for the education of children with disabilities.
1975	PL 94-142: The Education for All Handicapped Children Act	Mandated free appropriate public education (FAPE) for all children with disabilities, ensured due process rights, and mandated Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and provision of special education services in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Table 2
Directors of Graduate Program Forerunners

Institution	Directors of Graduate Programs
The Ohio State University	Walter Ersing
Indiana University	Evelyn Davies
Texas Woman's University	Claudine Sherrill
State University of New York at Brockport	Joseph Winnick
University of Utah	O.N. Hunter and Joan Moran
Slippery Rock State University	David Auxter
University of Connecticut	Hollis Fait
Wisconsin State University of LaCrosse	Lane Goodwin

Table 3
First Recipients of the Federal Training Grants

Institution	Directors of Program	Physical Education	Recreation
University of South Florida	Lou Bowers	x	
University of Missouri	Barbara Godfrey	x	
University of California - Berkeley	Larry Rarick	x	
The Ohio State University	Walt Ersing	x	
University of Texas	Lynn McCraw	x	
George Washington University	Honey Nashman	x	
University of South Carolina	Walter Hambrick	x	
San Jose State College	Jon Nesbitt		x
New York University	Edith Ball		x
University of Kentucky	Peter Verhoven		x
University of North Carolina	H. Douglas Sessoms		x
University of Illinois	Allen Sapora		x
Indiana State University	Dolores Musgraves (Geddes)	x	x
Southern Connecticut State College	Edith DeBonis	x	x

es to the organizational structure, and reflect trends in professional preparation and practice (e.g., S. Dillon appointed the Research Chair in 2016 to reflect the increasing emphasis on research within the Consortium, which was formalized in 2019 with bylaws amendments). Updates to the bylaws were also made to address changes in the membership make up as well as the methods of technology used to communicate with the membership. The Consortium membership changes also resulted in organization name changes.

The first name change occurred in 1992 as the organization felt the need to align with the Disability Rights movement and switch from “Handicapped” to “Individuals with Disabilities” (Porretta, 2016). In 2012, President Marty Block, initiated the process of changing the Consortium name from the National Consortium for Physical Education and Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPERID) to National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPEID) to more accurately reflect the Consortium’s membership (See Table 5). In 2013, under the direction of President Terry Rizzo, the name and bylaws were officially updated to reflect the name change. Rizzo also initiated updating the Consortium’s status with the federal government, which resulted in the Consortium’s “non for profit status” being updated and officially receiving Section 501(c) (3) non-profit organization status approval in 2014.

The Role of the Consortium

Consortium’s Involvement in Legislation and Advocacy Surrounding Adapted Physical education

As reflected in the many iterations of the organization’s name, the Consortium has always focused on advocating for physical education and physical activity, including recreation, for individuals with disabilities. For example, archival documents reveal that in the 1970s the Consortium President’s role was to communicate regularly with the BEH providing rationale for the value of physical education and

recreation for individuals with disabilities and communicating the need for personnel preparation funding to government officials; assess and prioritize needs; and in-service colleagues with respect to quality grant writing and management (Sherrill, 1988). Further, the first meeting of the Ad-Hoc committee in 1973 was held in Washington DC so that the founders could go to Capitol Hill and meet with the senators from their home districts (Sherrill, 1988). Similar to today, early Consortium members functioned as lobbyists for funding and ongoing state and national legislation regarding programs for individuals with disabilities (Fait & Dunn, 1984). In fact, the early members of the Consortium (known as NCPERH at that time) were instrumental in (a) working with the BEH to establish rules and regulations of major laws passed in the 1970s, and (b) advocating for physical education and recreation services to individuals with disabilities as part of the laws, including the inclusion of physical education as a direct service in the Education for all Handicapped Children’s Act of 1975 (Sherrill, 1988). The little-known position statement, *A Model Legislative Statue in Physical Education for the Handicapped*, authored by early leaders David Auxter, Lawrence Rarick, Jack Keogh, David J. Szymanski, Joan Moran, and Julian Stein was actually used as a guide for the legislative requirements (Chasey, 1979). In 1973, as the discipline developed, the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD, currently known as SHAPE America) drafted the Functions and Competencies for training Adapted Physical Educators. These competencies were again amended in 1981 as the AAHPERD Competencies for Adapted Physical Education Service Delivery (Sherrill, 1988).

Consortium annual meetings have consistently been held in Washington DC over the years to allow the membership to meet with congressional leaders as well as selected BEH/OSEP leaders, who regularly attend Consortium annual meetings to share changes in educational priorities and insights on OSEP professional preparation program funding opportunities. All but three of the Consortium annual meetings in the past 30 years have been held in the Washington, DC area. As part of the early annual meetings, a “trip to the hill” was often scheduled before or after the conference sessions; though recently, only the 1998 and 2016 annual meeting programs noted a Capitol Hill visit as part of the schedule. Through

Table 4
Consortium Bylaws Over the Years

Year	Description of Change	President at Time
1975	Initial Bylaws were created and approved	Joseph Winnink
2006	Updated to meet technology (i.e. email, etc.) for the functioning of the organization	Garth Tymeson
2009	Updated structure of organization to include an executive committee and a board of directors. Adding in the Legislative chair position. Incorporated Operating codes for each position	Ron Davis
2013	Updated language to represent membership	Terry Rizzo
2019	Updated language to meet use of technology for voting, newsletters, and website. Adding in the position of Research Chair and Historian.	Dallas Jackson

Table 5
Consortium Name Changes

Year	Name Change
1974	National Consortium for Physical Education and Recreation for the Handicapped
1992	National Consortium for Physical Education and Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities
2013	National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities

these interactions with Senators, Representatives and OSEP personnel, Consortium members also provided input to key stakeholders and clarified issues impacting physical education and physical activity for persons with disabilities. The Consortium has also regularly been involved in advocacy initiatives and communications with key Senators, Representatives, OSEP personnel and other national organizations who support the mission of the Consortium (e.g., Council for Exceptional Children, SHAPE America, National Coalition for Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services, etc.). Consistent with the early work of the Consortium, the following examples reflect the more recent “behind the scenes” advocacy work of the Consortium.



In 2010, Consortium President Ron Davis, President-Elect Terry Rizzo and members Garth Tymeson and Robert Arnhold met with OSEP personnel following the 2004 changes to IDEA Section 300.108 that added the phrase, “... unless the public agency enrolls children without disabilities and does not provide physical education to children without disabilities in the same grades” to the physical education statute. The meeting clarified the deleterious impact of that change on physical education services for students with disabilities and advocated for its removal or amendment. Around that same time, the Consortium supported the efforts of the Government Accountability Office (GAO) in their investigation of the status of physical education and athletics for students with disabilities. Following the publication of the GAO report in 2010 and the follow up responses from the US Department of Education in 2011 and 2013, the Consortium leadership was compelled to advocate with two targeted initiatives.

First, selected leaders from SHAPE America (Pam Skogstad, Luis Columna, and Carly Braxton Wright) and the Consortium (Suzanna Dillon, Robert Arnhold, and Tim Davis) requested and were granted meetings with members of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP), which was led at the time by Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa. The collective group of Consortium and SHAPE America leadership met with 14 of the 23 Senators on the committee in the fall of 2013 and advocated for improving physical education and athletic opportunities for students with disabilities through legislation, including revised language within IDEA. The efforts, sadly, are ongoing as IDEA has yet to be reauthorized.

Second, the Consortium leadership requested an OSEP *Dear Colleague Letter* to clarify the legal mandates regarding physical education to the country’s school districts and parents/families to ensure that children with disabilities receive the physical education services they deserve and to ensure

they are taught by appropriately credentialed, highly effective teachers. In 2014, Consortium President Suzanna Dillon requested and was granted a meeting with the OSEP Director, Melody Musgrove, and other key OSEP personnel including OSEP Research to Practice Division Director, Larry Wexler; Secondary, Transition and Postsecondary Associate Division Director, David Guardino; and Project Officers Louise Tripoli and David Emenheiser. Consortium lead-

ership including Suzanna Dillon, Garth Tymeson, Robert Arnhold, and Dave Martinez presented compelling evidence of how students with disabilities were being denied access to appropriate physical education services, often because of misinterpretations of IDEA. The professional concerns addressed were confirmed and validated by OSEP personnel, however a *Dear Colleague Letter* in the format requested was not produced.



The Consortium continues to collaborate with other key stakeholders and organizations to improve physical education and physical activity opportunities for individuals with disabilities. For example, since 2014, the Consortium has been a member of the National Coalition on Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services (NCPSSERS). Representing the Consortium, Suzanna Dillon has collaborated with representatives from more than 30 participating member organizations to address personnel shortages in the schools, including shortages in adapted physical education personnel (see <https://specialedshortages.org/about-the-shortage/>). The Consortium is also represented on the Voices for Health Kids Physical Education and Physical Activity Coalition, which is led by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, and includes member organizations such as SHAPE America, the American College of Sports Medicine, Active Schools, and the American Heart Association. This coalition raises awareness about children’s health and physical activity issues and advances changes at the local level through targeted initiatives supported by national organizations and resources.

The Consortium leadership, which has been vital to the organization's success, has evolved over the years to meet the needs of the organization and to address current issues (Refer to Tables 4 and 5). Historical references note that from 1975-1991 the Consortium Presidency was a one-year term with Presidents alternating between professionals from Physical Education and Recreation to fairly represent the membership. In 1991, the Consortium presidency was extended to two-year terms (Sherrill & DePauw, 1995).

Consortium's Role in Supporting and Development of Professional Preparation

The early 1900s saw the development of professional preparation in teaching students with disabilities with colleges and universities initially following a medical model and then changing over to an educational model (Sherrill, 1988). In most programs the general physical educator was the one being trained to work with students with disabilities. A divide started to appear where the focus on "correctives" or "therapeutics" within the preparation programs was being abandoned and the leaders of the APE movement pushed the need to emphasize the training. As a result, Harry Scott of Teachers College, Columbia University, stressed the need to add adapted physical education competency training into the preparation for physical education teachers (Sherrill, 1988). Professional preparation for adapted physical educators continued to establish itself in the 1960s. One of the first studies focused on teacher preparation, was conducted by the Education Directors of each state and the physical education director of the Physical Education Director of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE; now Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP] or American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [AACTE]). The reporting of results revealed that 37 states neither required nor strongly recommended the need for an adapted physical education course for undergraduate physical education majors (Hooley, 1964). It was also noted that many (40%) of the undergraduate physical education teacher preparation programs did not require an adapted physical education course. Based upon the results, Hooley highlighted the need for professional educators to determine acceptable preparation requirements for adapted physical educators and also emphasized the need to establish criteria and skill set of those teaching adapted physical education courses at the college and university level. During the 1950s and 60s the professional preparation of adapted physical educators found its niche as a discipline with the term "adapted physical education." A variety of textbooks brought in the "corrective" perspective including chapters on different disabling conditions and methods for accommodating those conditions (Sherrill, 1988). Even with the establishment as a discipline, French and Jansma (1982) noted that in the 1960s most general physical educators were self-taught because of having only one introductory course in adapted

physical education. However, teacher preparation began to change in 1966 as concerted efforts were initiated regarding the preparation of adapted physical educators.

The first professional preparation grants were established by the federal government as a result of PL 90-170 (Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act). Section V of this act authorized the US government to make grants to colleges and universities for research and professional preparation in the area of physical education for the "handicapped" (Sherrill, 1988). As a result of PL 90-170, a total of 15 training grants were awarded to institutions of higher education to develop specializations in physical education and recreation for the handicapped (See Table 3 for a list of these funded programs). By 1975 the directors of these funded grants were looking for assistance with writing grants and developing programs (Sherrill, 1988).

Early programs were working to shape the curricula for preparing adapted physical educators and there was a lot to be learned and shared amongst the directors. So through the annual meetings, directors increased their understanding of legislative issues, writing grant proposals, and managing grants (Sherrill, 1988). Annual meetings also addressed issues in professional preparation including education of the general public about what the needs of individuals with disabilities are regarding recreation and physical activity and communicating the value of APE and recreation to administrators.

From the early days of the Consortium to now, 50 years later, the organization continues to provide a forum for addressing issues of professional preparation through various presentations. In fact, Sherrill and DePauw (1997) referenced that it was the Presidents of the Consortium in the 1970s and 1980s who lead the effort to make sure that funding for professional preparation programs continued to occur as they offered continued growth of the knowledge (i.e., textbooks and competencies) focused on legislative issues, advocacy methods, and grant writing skills at annual meetings and other collaboration efforts. More recently, when examining the topic themes of the annual meetings from 2006 to the present it is evident that the Consortium has focused on many elements including: (a) physical education, (b) disability sport, (c) physical activity, (d) legislation and policy, (e) advocacy, and (f) grant writing (Sullivan & Piletic, 2019). It should also be noted that every annual meeting has included invited speakers from the OSEP office. The annual meeting has also been hosted either directly before or directly after the meeting for directors of grants funded by the OSEP office; thus, showing the continued value of the Consortium for professional development in the area of adapted physical education.

Consortium's Role in Defining the Professional Knowledge Base of Adapted Physical Education Specialist (Knowledge and Skills)

APE is multidisciplinary; with its roots found in correctives, kinesiology/biomechanics, medicine, physical and occupational therapy, special education, counseling, physical education, recreation, medicine, human development, psychology, teacher education and the like (Sherrill, 1988; Sherrill & DePauw, 1997). The evolution of the APE field influenced the development of the APE professional preparation programs, often with support from OSEP grants (See Table 6). Over the years, professional preparation programs used these various models and concepts to build their programs, but there was no consistency in the profession nor was there national recognition of the skills and knowledge needed to provide APE services until the Consortium developed the Adapted Physical Education National Standards (APENS) and corresponding national certification and exam.

Stages	Years	Title
Stage 1	Prior to 1900's	Medically Oriented Gymnastics and Drill
Stage 2	1900-1929	Conceptualization of the Whole Child: Education Through the Physical
Stage 3	1930-1951	Corrective Physical Education
Stage 4	1952-1966	Adapted Physical Education
Stage 5	1967-Present	Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary Adapted Physical Education

In 1992, the Consortium (then known as NCPERID) received a 5-year grant from the OSEP to establish national standards for APE, which would be used to: (a) guide APE service provision within the least restrictive environment, (b) guide APE personnel preparation and employment, and (c) create a national examination for certification purposes. The OSEP-funded APENS Project was a national project executed by the Consortium in partnership with the National Association of State Directors of Special Education and Special Olympics International. APENS activities started in 1992 with a needs analysis, and expanded in 1993 with the development of the professional content standards. The corresponding APENS exam was developed over the next four years through the following process: (a) the APENS Exam database was created in 1994 with a test question bank of 3,024 test items (aligned with a majority of the 756 APENS Level 4 statements), (b) test item validation occurred across 1995 and resulted in 504 test items being retained in the APENS exam database, and (c) the first national exam was hosted in 1997. With the standards and exam in place, the Consortium advanced forward with the goal of having “a

nationally certified Adapted Physical Educator (CAPE)—the one qualified person who can make meaningful decisions for children with disabilities in physical education—within every school district in the country” (<https://APENS.org>). For additional information see *Why a National Standard for Adapted Physical Education?* at www.APENS.org.

The APENS were updated and the second edition was published in 2006 with corresponding updates made to the existing APENS test items, though no new test items were developed or added to the APENS Exam database. The third and most recent edition of the APENS (2019) was completed by the APENS Standards Committee composed of Luke Kelly, Hester Henderson, Suzanna Dillon and Tim Davis with assistance from Wes Wilson. Unlike prior APENS Standards Committees, this committee was charged with conducting major and minor revisions to the standards as well as expanding the test item database to address the standards for which test items did not exist. The APENS Standards Committee's work spanned from 2015 to 2019 as they revised and wrote new APENS standards; and developed approximately 600 new test items aligned with the new Level 4 statements, the revised Level 4 statements that lacked test items, and the test items that were recommended for replacement by the APENS Evaluation and Review Committees. The third edition of the APENS was published in 2019, though validation of the APENS Exam items is on-going under the direction of the Consortium's APENS Committee and APENS Executive Director. The APENS and the exam represent the current knowledge base and best practices, supported by research, that should be used in service delivery by APE professionals across the United States.

Consortium's Role in Supporting and Disseminating Research within Adapted Physical Activity

Research has been critical to the advancement of the profession and the Consortium's activities including legislative advocacy, professional preparation and APENS initiatives. Early researchers in the field of APE included scholars such as Arthur Daniels, Hollis Fait, H. Harrison Clarke, Evelyn Davies, Leon Johnson, Lawrence Rarick, Julian Stein, and Robert Holland. These early leaders guided research on the topic of intellectual disability (then referred to as mental retardation), and training of physical educators to work with individuals with differing abilities in not only a segregated classroom but also a general physical education class (Sherrill, 1988). Though the APE discipline continued to evolve, it remained marginalized because of what appeared to be a low prioritization of acceptance for individuals who are different than the norm. This marginalization precipitated the need for networking among experts whose research and teaching interests were specific to individuals who are different (Sherrill & DePauw, 1997); and, again, the Consortium aided the profession with addressing this research-related issue.

The Consortium was one of three professional organizations (i.e., AAHPERD and International Federation of Adapted Physical Activity [IFAPA]) working to meet the needs of APE professionals. According to Sherrill (1988), research was presented for the first time at an annual meeting in 1982. The Consortium emphasized its value for research by establishing two professional awards (G. Lawrence Rarick Research Award and the Hollis Fait Scholarly Contribution Award) that same year (Sullivan & Piletic, 2019).

The research efforts continued to be apparent and vital as a result of the federally funded programs, again often directed by members of the Consortium. Scholars within these programs were conducting numerous types of research including: (a) development, function, and performance of individuals with disabilities, (b) advocacy for individuals with disabilities, and (c) field based or curriculum research (Sherrill and DePauw, 1997). The annual conference has continued to serve as the site for research to be presented to the membership. Generally speaking, each year there are 10-25 different research studies that are shared with the membership at the annual conference. In fact, as a way to acknowledge and encourage the memberships' continued research efforts in 2015 the Consortium Board of Directors (BOD) added an honorarium program for masters and doctoral students presenting their research at the conference. Additionally, the David P. Beaver APA Professional Young Scholar Award was established in 2015 to celebrate the research conducted by younger professionals, complementing the Rarick and Fait awards. The Research Chair became an official position on the BOD in 2019 for the purpose of overseeing all identified research activities within and around the membership. After a review of annual conference programs, a shift in focus was evident, revealing that across time there has been an increase in the number of research presentations at the national conference. This supports the development of the Emerging Scholar Symposium, Graduate Research Competition, role of the Research Chair and policies for conducting research through the Consortium.

The Consortium's Endeavors to Continue Pushing Forward

As society and educational systems continue to evolve, so must the Consortium. To that end, the Consortium has worked to keep pace by incorporating technology into its operational elements and organizational initiatives. For example, advocacy efforts have been advanced through the use of the Consortium website (www.NCPEID.org), online *Advocate* newsletter, and Social Media. The *Advocate* newsletter, initiated in 1974 with John Dunn as editor, was mailed quarterly to the membership until 2004, and then emailed quarterly from 2004-2006. Starting in 2006, the Consortium shifted away from the *Advocate* newsletter and toward information sharing via the Consortium website, but there

was still a need to disseminate information more thoroughly. Discussions amongst the Consortium leadership in 2016 resulted in the archiving of prior editions of the newsletter on the Consortium website. The *Advocate* was reinstated as a e-newsletter in 2018. The *Advocate* newsletter is currently available as a member benefit through the website and is distributed electronically to members through email each semester (e.g. fall and winter) for the purpose of disseminating critical information and extending online resources.

Since the early 2000s, the organization has developed and revamped, multiple times, the NCPEID website for its membership. The initial Consortium website, which was revised in 2006 under the direction of Garth Tymeson, provided basic information to members and the general public. The APENS website was launched in 2005 and served to provide information about APENS, reference materials and the national exam, including exam registration. A redesigned Consortium website and new webmaster were unveiled in 2016, which was subsequently replaced by the current NCPEID website in February 2019. Additionally, by 2015, the NCPEID and APENS had established a social media presence (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) to share information about events, and even more recently podcasts with experts delivered through social media platforms. Table 7 provides information about the Consortium website and social media platforms and Figure 1 illustrates common hashtags. The intent has been to elevate the Consortium presence by communicating with membership through Social Media, and Consortium website.

In addition to discussion of critical issues through the *Advocate* and social media, the Consortium has regularly hosted a Past Presidents Panel at the annual conference to leverage expertise from current leaders in the field. Initiated in 2006, and active through 2017, the Past Presidents' Panel served to address critical issues within the profession and consider possible solutions. For example, Past Presidents' Panels have included: (a) the consortium's impact on the lives of persons with disabilities, (b) APE professional preparation, (c) organization structure and focus, and (d) technology and professional development. Many of these discussions led to actionable items for the Consortium and were integrated into Consortium activities (e.g., addition of the Research Chair). In 2018, the Past Presidents' Panel was replaced with a Last

Dates	Distribution	Frequency
1974-2004	mailed	quarterly
2004-2006	emailed	quarterly
2018	e-newsletter	fall and winter
Stage 4	1952-1966	Adapted Physical Education
Stage 5	1967-Present	Multidisciplinary/ Interdisciplinary Adapted Physical Education

Lecture (renamed the Wisdom Lecture in 2019) with Luke Kelly delivering the inaugural address. This Wisdom Lecture, to be delivered by a senior scholar in the field, is intended to inspire the membership of the Consortium through reflections on professional experiences and the sharing of insights learned, as well as to challenge the membership to continue moving the profession forward. Through the aforementioned activities, the Consortium demonstrates its commitment to addressing new and recurring issues, including the need to advocate for individuals with disabilities, through progressive professional activities.

Conclusion

This historical perspective highlights prior achievements of the Consortium and its membership as well as confirms our need to address ongoing issues in APE with support from a national organization. Sustained advocacy efforts are needed for the continued advancement of the field, which require us to collectively disseminate research, coordinate legislative efforts, guide professional preparation and advance APE best practices. The Consortium continues to serve this purpose within the APE profession in the U.S. To that end, Bundschuh (1986) emphasized that the Consortium must continue to work together to lead the profession forward and to continue to advocate for individuals with disabilities. His statement, which holds true today, reflects the professional priority:

Our responsibility as members of the Consortium is to reform the stereotypes, and to work with others to develop a world that portrays the variety and richness of individual experience and the positive influences those experiences have on the quality of life in our society (pp. 150).

As demonstrated in this article, the Consortium has evolved to meet the professional priorities identified by leaders within the APE profession; supported excellence and scholarship in professional preparation, including defining the knowledge base through APENS; and consistently lobbied for legislative support for individuals with disabilities in physical education and physical activity. We need to reflect on the history and accomplishments of the Consortium and the APE profession to affirm, “its future is strong, and its history is increasingly rich” (Sherrill, 1988, pp. xiii).

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