TO: Active, Associate and Affiliate Members
American Psychoanalytic Association

FROM: Richard C. Simons, M.D.
President

DATE: June 9, 1987

Dear Colleagues:

At various times throughout the history of the American Psychoanalytic Association questions have arisen concerning the Association's position with respect to members who wish to teach, supervise, and/or analyze candidates at institutes or programs that are not affiliated with the Association or that do not conform to the educational standards of the Association's Board on Professional Standards. This is a complicated issue which, not surprisingly, has generated a considerable amount of discussion and debate over the years. In view of ongoing developments, the Executive Committee and the Executive Council have reviewed this question and have endorsed the following statement:

The American Psychoanalytic Association has never taken disciplinary or punitive action against any member who has been involved in training candidates in non-affiliated institutes or programs. On the contrary, as is well known, many members have engaged in such activities for many years and continue to do so today. Those members remain in good standing in our Association, some having achieved considerable prominence within it. Moreover, in 1956 -- the only time that the membership was asked to vote on the matter -- it rejected a by-law amendment that would have prohibited such training at unaffiliated institutes.

Despite these considerations, there have been occasions when policy making components of the Association and/or individuals serving in leadership positions have expressed the position that participation by members in psychoanalytic training outside of institutes affiliated with the Association is not in the public interest and, consequently, that it would violate established principles for our members to engage in such training. Those who have taken this position have done so, we believe, on the basis of a sincerely held opinion that psychoanalytic training is an integrated process that must meet certain standards in order to assure the competence of those trained.

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We realize that there may be a potential tension arising from these various statements and actions. To avoid any possible confusion, we wish to stress two essential points.

First, the American Psychoanalytic Association firmly believes that high educational and ethical standards are at the heart of effective psychoanalytic training. These concerns have always been a paramount consideration in our evolution and development. In particular, our Board on Professional Standards has promulgated training standards that we believe will best serve the public, the profession and our patients. Adherence to these standards remains a requirement for our Accredited Institutes. Likewise, Section 12 of the Association's Principles of Ethics for Psychoanalysts reflects our opinion that members should conduct training in institutes or programs that observe high quality standards.

Second, it is the position of the American Psychoanalytic Association that neither Section 12 nor any other Section of the Principles imposes any ethical requirement on members of the Association to treat the standards adopted or approved by the Association's Board on Professional Standards as the only educational and training standards that are appropriately high. In support of that recognition, we state unequivocally that any member who teaches, supervises, or analyzes candidates in training other than at an institute affiliated with the Association will not be subject to any disciplinary or ethical proceedings on that account and, further, that such activities will not affect a member's status within the Association. Nor will the Association encourage or support anyone else in taking adverse action against any member or other person for teaching, supervising, or analyzing candidates in training other than at an institute affiliated with the Association. We are also of the view that each of our Accredited Institutes and Affiliate Societies should be guided unequivocally by this position.