

# 2023 Candidate Statement – Candidate for Director



**Eric Folmar, PT, DPT**  
**Board-Certified Orthopaedic Clinical Specialist**

**Question:** What meaningful qualities do you bring to the Board of Directors that would help to achieve the APTA strategic plan?

**Response:**

Standing, contemplating, taking it in... Maybe it's an old building, a pile of materials, or a rough sketch on a piece of paper. This is a familiar position to me as I try to envision not only what it was, but what it is and what it could be. Working backwards from my goal I identify barriers and opportunities to ensure that the product is not only what I had hoped for but that it can withstand the challenges that will follow and has the flexibility to adapt if need be. My hobby is construction. My passion is building.

My professional and leadership journeys draw close comparisons to my life as a builder. I often tell my students and patients there is considerable overlap in the skills I learned in PT school and the skills I have developed as a builder. The rest I then learned through time and experience. For instance, a building is basically a frame with a unique exterior. The interior design gives its true character. Embedded in the walls are the functional pieces that bring it to life. Humans, and organizations for that matter, are built similarly. The key in management of any of these is understanding how stresses will impact the structure and how the structure supports the mission. Having foresight to identify potential stressors, the flexibility to address the unforeseen, and the creativity and willingness to build for the future results in success.

This ability to think strategically is one of my greatest assets and has prepared me well to serve the APTA to build towards its current strategic goals, as well as to develop the next strategic plan for 2025 and beyond.

Foundation is instrumental in building successful structure. Looking at building the APTA for the future, it is clear the foundation of APTA rests in our members and in our values. Our foundation is strong. The core values and members that make up APTA represent all that is great about our profession. Our foundation is not, however, well-constructed for the future. Building a robust membership has been at the forefront of strategy for years. To achieve this, we need to expand and fortify the foundation of diversity in our communities and our profession to allow for continued growth and sustainability. We must create member value by listening to and elevating our members while demolishing barriers to create an environment that is welcoming to all.

Once plans are in place, the builder must have the right tools. I have developed versatile tool set through broad leadership experiences as Massachusetts Chapter President, manager of a large clinical practice, owner of a small private practice, leader of an academic department, and developer and trustee of a charitable foundation. In these roles I have learned to capitalize on strengths of myself and others, address weaknesses, and to turn challenges into opportunities. Identifying, managing, and utilizing resources with intent has allowed me to be effective and efficient in my efforts, whether it be building a house or advancing and leading an organization.

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Other tools that I lean on have been identified in my Talent Insights® portfolio: selflessness, instinct, intentionality, and resourcefulness. Further instilled while leading through a pandemic the importance of organizational agility, effective communication, and being action driven to meet needs of members and society in a crisis. The versatility in my toolbox gives me the necessary capacity and perspectives to be successful and accountable at both the project management level and at the hammer and nails level.

Managing any project requires a recognition of strengths and weaknesses. Investing and collaborating with our members, and those who intersect with our profession, expand our capacity and the quality of our work. Relationship building and collaboration have been cornerstones in my leadership style. I have established strong relationships with other health professions, legislators and payors that allowed us to make progress in the payment and legislative realms.

The skills and tools I have acquired as both a literal and figurative builder will transfer well to the role of APTA Director. Above all, I bring passion for what I do and motivation and desire to do things at the highest level. I treat, teach, build, and lead with the same enthusiasm, allowing me to stay in touch at the ground level and remind myself daily what is so great about our profession. I am committed to building and moving forward with the pillars of sustainability, value, quality, and demand at the forefront.

I appreciate your time and your service.