

Candidate Statement – Candidate for Director



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Question: What uniquely qualifies you for the role of Director, and how does that contribute to the association's vision, mission, and strategic plan?

Response:

It is a great privilege to run for APTA Director, two years in a row. Having run a year ago, but not elected, it took courage, grit, passion, and a lifetime commitment to service, to run for national office once again. I am hopeful that delegates will accord my candidacy, a second and fresh look:

I will bring to the APTA Director role, unique national and international leadership experience, and academic preparations in business and public health. Even though I was not privileged to have previously served in the House of Delegates (HOD), however, I bring a 30-year continuous history of Board level leadership positions in physical therapy professional Associations, starting as a student and later as a physical therapist. I have been a local, national, and international leader, beholding to, and implementing policies, and mandates of the legislative arm of professional Associations on whose Boards I have served. My lack of direct HOD service can therefore be assuaged by decades of executive Board level leadership experience.

Additional unique experiences I will bring to the APTA Director role include my perspectives as an internationally educated physical therapist, I have lived and worked on two continents, two nations, and five states within the United States. This necessitated that I continuously undergo processes of acculturation, as I adapt to American ways of life starting in the Midwest, East/Northeast, South, and the West. I have lived, worked, and interacted with peoples, and cultures of large, small, and medium sized cities, towns, counties, and localities, including urban, suburbs, rural, and semi-rural. I have been affiliated with five academic institutions here in the United States, including two minority serving institutions (HBCU, and Jewish). These lived experiences have enriched my person, gave me broader perspectives, and better understanding of our nation, its diversity and how this affects the principles and practice of physical therapy. We can only transform society by optimizing movement when this translates into access to quality care provided by PTs/PTAs that is adapted to patient values and preferences, clinical circumstances, settings, and the local environment.

In this past year, our nation was embroiled in a global pandemic (a public health and economic challenge), and for the first time, the broad, open, and frank discourse on issues bordering on race relations, social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) on local, states, national levels. I have personally lived through some of these life experiences and have recently participated in innovative and strategic solutions serving on ACAPT's Board as Secretary.

In Director role, my potential contributions/impact on APTA's Strategic plan 2019-2021 include:

1. **Relevance: Increase Member Value and Engagement** – We need to break the 'glass ceiling' of APTA membership. Of the 258,200 and 149,300 PTs and PTAs respectively employed in 2019 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics), only 60,842 (or 23.6%) PTs and 7,644 (5.1%) PTAs were APTA members (2019 Annual Board Report). We also need to convert the 31,475 current PTs/PTAs student members to full APTA membership upon graduation. I will engage the APTA Board on strategic and innovative solutions to remove barriers to APTA membership.

2. **Stewardship: Foster Long-Term Sustainability of the Physical Therapy Practice:** As an educator of physical therapists, I am committed to working with APTA Board on innovative solutions to pare down student debt by engaging in constructive conversations with all stakeholders - academic institutions and their administration, governments and third-party payers on payment related issues, and inclusion of PTs/PTAs in loan-repayment programs for services.
3. **Quality: Elevate the Quality of Care Provided by PTs and PTAs and reduce unwarranted variations:** Having served in rural southwest of Virginia, I became aware of the social determinants of health and barriers to accessing quality care provided by PTs and PTAs. My passion, and determination to help correct this led to my consequent academic preparation in Public Health; I will bring these insights, and gravitas to the APTA Director position.
4. **Value: Maximize Stakeholder Awareness of the Value of Physical Therapy:** I believe that the future of our profession includes incorporating a population/public health framework into clinical practice. I will engage the APTA Board and the HOD, on the need to start giving serious consideration to, and potentially include population health paradigm shift for our profession, going forward. A good start is the APTA's advocacy for physical therapy as the choice intervention for pain as an alternative to the opioid epidemic, and the roles of PTs/PTAs during COVID pandemic. APTA's mission statement is population/public health focused and can be on target to be fully actualized.

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