

2023 Candidate Statement – Candidate for Director



Colleen Chancler, PT, MHS, PhD

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

Response:

The APTA strategic plan is broad and bold. The plan provides opportunity to make gains internally with our members and future members and externally with the community and stakeholders. I have had the opportunity to be a member of many groups, to lead a group of members, and to lead groups of other leaders. My leadership style is to include diversity of opinion around the table and to facilitate conversation to lead consensus. In Chapter Board meetings, I reimplemented discussion groups prior to the official Board meeting which allowed for conversation and idea development prior to the formality of the meeting. Including and welcoming our leadership and membership allowed us to make the best decisions for the chapter. I can find and invite diverse thinkers to develop the conversation toward solution based decisions.

After attending a CSM session on Minority Affairs Committees (MAC), I returned to Pennsylvania (PA) and started a MAC with another member who also attended the same session. Building on ideas from APTA and other Chapters, we built and continue to have a strong MAC in PA. The MAC membership now spans across the state, has more members, and the MAC continues to have a presence in our workplaces with expansion to community activities. Our Chapter office staff moved, and the PA Board realized that our office building was not needed. After the sale of our chapter building, our Board approved spending some of the funds from that sale on DEI initiatives, which was cited as a member value in previous surveys. Our task force developed scholarships for universities and colleges to develop new programs that would specifically increase the number of racially and ethnically diverse applicants, students, and graduates. This program was modelled after the ADaPT program and with consultation of Dr. Hicks, at the University of Delaware. Unique to our scholarship award is that the seed money may not have the immediate desired effect to increase diversity, however, the lessons learned with their new initiatives would eventually improve the application to graduation processes. We are on the second round of scholarships. Additionally, each group of scholarship awardees were required to participate in the PA MAC and share their story and evidence. This information, both success and failure, is helping us learn how to make suggestions to implement similar successful programs. Money and support for new ideas which may not always result in immediate success but has potential and member value is money well spent. As a Board member, I will advocate for and support new ideas to improve our DEI standing within healthcare.

Legislative change is imperative for patient access and our ability to provide quality care with practice at the highest level of our license. I had the opportunity to serve as President of the Council of Chapter Presidents. It was important to me as that leader to develop agendas with the staff liaison allowing us to focus on common issues so the chapters could understand the national focus as well as the individual impact of legislation and member needs. During these meetings, I was able to coordinate with APTA staff to provide presentations for information that typically was difficult to identify. The Council used the meetings to discuss strategies for legislative actions that affected more than a single chapter. Understanding and discussing legislation in real time provided the Chapter Presidents immediate resources for success. Presidents shared advice and guidance with each other on language of bills, inclusion of details for future bills, and methods within the states to achieve passage of negotiated bills.

In the current strategic plan, I am most excited about the goal to explore member engagement. Since COVID, we have changed as a society and certainly as an organization. This is a unique opportunity for us to foster collaborative groups, like the learning communities from the academies, and develop more communities like the Health Promotion and Wellness Council. Although work and social life are nearing pre-COVID status, we cannot ignore that some of our members value and now expect online engagement beyond educational experiences. Efforts in creating and providing resources for these communities can strengthen our existing membership and inform those with the desire to connect digitally they are equally welcome and valueable. Using technology for membership engagement may extend the reach of APTA. As an APTA Board member, I would advocate to scale similar models.

I appreciate the work each of us is doing to make important decisions for the leadership of APTA and I ask for your vote.