

2022 Candidate Statement – Candidate for Director



Heather Renee Jennings, PT, DPT Board-Certified Neurologic Clinical Specialist

Question: What is your vision for the future of APTA, and what knowledge, skills, and abilities do you possess to help us achieve that vision?

Response:

Say *cheese!* Every Kodak Moment was a vision of the past, forever captured in glossy color. We all hold those memories dear and they define our visions for the future.

My picture for the future of APTA is *to be a nimble adaptor, distinctly relevant, skilled in foresight and innovation, and meaningful to all persons.*

So how does a Kodak moment influence this vision? Founded in 1892, Kodak grew to a value of over \$10 billion dollars, with the term “Kodak Moment” becoming a household phrase. Yet in 2012 this iconic company filed for bankruptcy. They failed to be prepared for the changing digital climate. They clutched too tightly to the idea that they existed to print photos rather than to share memories.

Learning from Kodak, we must not mistake 100 years of our profession as a guarantee for another century of success. Instead, we advance the profession by listening intently and watching closely for the early signals of new trends and by adapting quickly. We must be innovators in well-designed solutions to problems that matter, not just as new pathways present but anticipating what is to follow. This places APTA in a position of continued strength to guide emerging practice such that clear standards are set high. It enables us to strategically minimize unintended consequences that may occur if innovation gets ahead of us.

My vision above will enable APTA to meet its mission to *build a community to advance the profession and improve the health of society.* To do this we must be meaningful and relevant. I believe that if we fail to make membership in our association more than meaningful, but truly engaging for all PTs and PTAs, we will fail in the quest for foresight and nimbleness. It is critical that we create a community in which all PTs and PTAs can belong, contribute to work that aligns with their passions, and provides them greater reward than they give. This will increase the voices streaming into our associations’ listening ear and keep us abreast to the changing field.

My passion for learning, skills as a relator, and commitment to strategic work will support the association in building our framework to live this vision for our next century. My experience as current APTA Director and 5th member of the Executive Committee, in daily clinical practice at the Department of Veterans Affairs, past president of APTA Massachusetts, and in various consultative roles, has expanded my view of our potential as physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. Furthermore, these experiences have created a thirst for continued listening and learning so that I, as well as the places I serve, can evolve to better meet the needs of the individuals we serve and society.

If Kodak’s purpose was really sharing memories, what is our purpose? We have built a profession on a purpose related to doing. With the shift to a doctoring profession, our ceiling was raised significantly. Our true “why” and fullest potential lies in the application of our cognition, our knowledge as highly-skilled experts in

movement. The impact we can have on improving the health of society is exponentially larger when our professional association is a pathbreaker, pioneering new ways that we can fully integrate in roles throughout all layers of society. This spans from serving in more non-traditional roles such as biotechnology engineers or CEOs, to every level of government policy-making. It extends to a future of true digital health, including remote care, real time monitoring of patients, and physical assistance delivered by drone, as well as economic models that support appropriate compensation for our expertise. We have the ability to take the lead in shaping our next century.

I am eager to continue the work of the Association and advance this vision by serving you on APTA's Board. I am driven to positively and exponentially impact the health of society by collaborating with the leaders around me. During my first term as Director, I made meaningful contributions, sharing thoughtful comments to spark the group to think differently. I did so by listening more than I speak and seeking data to see a broader perspective. I have developed a strong understanding of the opportunities and challenges that face the board and association. I will apply my respect for tradition with my passion for strategy to help set the path for APTA to ensure its next century of success.

Thank you for your service to the profession. I would appreciate your vote.

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