

2022 Candidate Statement – Candidate for Director



Robert (Bob) Latz, PT, DPT

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:

My vision for the future of APTA: We lead our community in the further integration of technology within physical therapy. In this process, we foster member-driven innovation. This innovation creates access to our expertise, improves quality of care, and demonstrates the value of our profession to others.

As a Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Director of Technology Integration for the past 15+ years, I am very aware of the digital transformation happening in healthcare. Whether we find this challenging or not, this transformation is happening and affects every aspect of our profession and our association. The speed of this transformation has increased exponentially with the pandemic, demographic changes, and advances in technology. In short, to improve the health of society, which is part of our APTA vision, we must accelerate our integration of technology within physical therapy. As evidenced in my CV, I bring a unique depth and breadth of experience to the APTA Board, from within and beyond the clinical setting.

In the future, physical therapy will seamlessly use technology to learn together, innovate, and improve our patient outcomes. We are already beginning to embrace this power of technology. In 2021, at the Virtual CSM, over 6,000 attendees participated in collaborative learning environments. In this same CSM, we found innovative ways to successfully bring our normally hands-on TechnoPalooza event into the virtual world. With patient care during the pandemic, we utilized telehealth to continue our services, even learning to use this technology to reach underserved populations. Still, there is more we can do. As a member of the APTA Board, I will encourage technology to improve access to each other and our patients.

Quality care in the future will be supported by technology so treatments are consistent, evidence-based, and outcome-oriented. This future relies on our ability to share electronic data within and across all settings, providing immediate access to information and support for clinical decisions. This is especially important when the patient transitions from one setting to another. Like many, I believe electronic data sharing is underutilized. Last summer, I experienced this firsthand, when my mother transferred from a hospital to a Skilled Nursing Facility and a brother from one hospital to another. In both instances, sharing data electronically would have improved the speed of clinical decisions and the quality of their care. Currently, I am involved in several interdisciplinary organizations advocating for improved data sharing such as CHIME, HIMSS and NASL—All of which are spelled out when you look at my CV. As an APTA Board Member, I will share my insights from these organizations and advocate for the integration of technology to improve care, including the sharing of data to inform our clinical decisions.

This clinical data, shared over time and across the continuum of care, is a powerful way to contribute to outcomes and demonstrate our value across episodes of care. Alongside clinical information, we can pull data from outside the clinic with devices such as smartwatches and infrared devices. Analyzing data in and out of the clinical setting informs care as well as overall health and wellness for individuals and populations. My knowledge of data infrastructure and data workflow brings a unique and important perspective to the APTA Board.

When I mention member-driven innovation, I mean this for all members. As part of my journey, I continue to learn and grow in the spaces of DEI. During my time on the ALI Board, I strongly supported the formations of PT Proud and Social Justice in Health Catalyst Groups and was the mentor and liaison for the Beyond Clinical Practice Catalyst Group. During our integration of technology, the DEI lens must remain prevalent.

I know how to work with others, build consensus, and move projects forward. I have held leadership roles in the Kentucky Chapter, the APTA Academy of Leadership and Innovation, and the Technology Special Interest Group. Some titles include Board member, President, Chair, and Mentor. In these roles, colleagues share that I listen open-minded to all sides of an issue and keep the vision of our profession at the forefront.

If you are still reading, you know I care deeply for our profession and our future. With your vote, I will work with you to lead our community in technology integration and member-driven innovation. My knowledge, skills, and abilities are different from every other current Board Member or candidate and emphasize connectivity, engagement, and innovation. Thank you for this opportunity to contribute, serve, and make a difference. I humbly ask for your vote.

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