

2025 Candidate Statement – Candidate for Director



Palak Shah, PT

Question: Describe how the core attributes for elected leadership you possess contribute to the fiduciary and strategic responsibilities of a Director on the APTA Board of Directors?

Response:

My journey as a clinician, leader, and co-founder has been guided by a relentless commitment to advancing physical therapy as a first-line pathway to health. I believe that my experience and leadership style, grounded in being courageous, futuristic, and strategic, uniquely position me to contribute to the fiduciary and strategic responsibilities of the APTA Board of Directors.

My nontraditional path to leadership, from being a foreign-trained PT to co-founding a national outpatient in-home PT organization, demonstrates the opportunities and support our profession offers to those who aspire to lead. Resilience and courage have been essential at every stage as I embraced challenges that required navigating payer negotiations, regulatory complexities, and skepticism toward new care models. Helping expand access to millions of PT visits has sharpened my ability to make principled decisions under pressure, advocate boldly for the value of our profession, and inspire others toward action. This courage aligns with the Board's fiduciary duty to ensure that APTA remains a trusted steward of resources while advancing the association's mission and vision.

Equally important has been my advocacy for physical therapists themselves. Building a national in-home outpatient PT network meant creating a platform that empowered PTs with flexibility, independence, and strong earning potential, while fostering a research-driven community where clinicians could learn from one another and amplify their impact on patients' quality of life. I believe that when PTs are supported with opportunity, data, and community, their potential to transform care is extraordinary. Also, my own path as a foreign-trained PT has deepened my commitment to ensuring APTA continues to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion so that all voices can shape our future.

My work across the physical therapy ecosystem, including partnerships with health systems, home health agencies, ambulatory surgery centers, and orthopedic groups, has underscored the opportunity of building a more integrated and patient-centered future. APTA's role in convening leaders and advancing advocacy is a powerful avenue to reduce fragmentation across disciplines and amplify our collective impact on the communities we serve.

Innovation has been at the center of my leadership. Spearheading initiatives such as predictive analytics, remote care management, and PT Pathways has helped identify high-risk populations and demonstrate the economic value of physical therapy to health systems and payers. I view the AI evolution not as a threat but as an opportunity to strengthen clinical excellence, reduce administrative burden, and expand access. Anticipating these changes, and translating them into strategies that protect and advance our profession, is critical work for APTA in the years ahead to position our profession at the forefront of health care transformation.

As a strategic thinker, I have advanced PT's role in health care by scaling innovative care models, integrating PT into value-based partnerships, and demonstrating its impact on outcomes and costs. These efforts were strengthened by building data infrastructures that enabled compliance, predictive insights, and outcome

measurement tools that gave health systems and payers clear evidence of PT's value. This blend of vision and data-informed execution is essential as APTA fulfills its fiduciary and strategic role, safeguarding member value, strengthening sustainability, and preparing the profession for a technology enabled future.

Together, these core attributes of being courageous, futuristic, and strategic define how I lead and how I will serve. I am honored to be considered for the Board of Directors and look forward to listening, learning, and working alongside colleagues to ensure that APTA not only meets its fiduciary and strategic responsibilities but thrives as a catalyst for transforming society through movement.