



AAP Advocacy & Public Policy Leadership Program

Patient Impact Curriculum

February 18, 2026 · Puerto Rico Convention Center Room 204

7:00-7:30 am

Breakfast on Your Own

7:30 – 8:00 am

Welcome and introductions of participants, curriculum overview, icebreaker exercises

Greg Worsowicz, MD, MBA, Chloe Slocum, MD, MPH

8:00 - 9:00 am

Reflections from a Career in Advocacy: Advancing Local, National and International Partnerships in Academic Psychiatry

Walter Frontera, MD, PhD

9:00 - 10:30 am

Session 1 - Adaptive Leadership Panel: Navigating Advocacy Across Unique Contexts

Greg Worsowicz, MD, MBA; Nneka Ifejika, MD, MPH; Vu Nguyen, MD, MBA; Gwendolyn Sowa, MD, PhD

10:30 –11:00 am

Break/Networking

11:00 am-12:30 pm

Session 2 - Perspectives on Provider Coalitions in Rehabilitation: Education, Research, and Administrative Leadership

Chris Rorick, MPA; William Micheo, MD; David Morgenroth, MD; Dan Pierce, MD; Brittany Snider, DO

12:30 – 1:30 pm

Lunch

1:30 - 3:00pm

Session 3 - Cultivating Well-Being in Rehabilitation

Bill Niehaus, MD; Chloe Slocum, MD, MPH; Aaron Yang, MD

3:00 - 3:30pm

Break/Networking

3:30 – 4:30 pm

Session 4 - Systems Savvy: Building Buy-In Among Peers and Hospital Leadership

David Steinberg, MD

4:30 – 5:00 pm

APPL Project Workgroup/Update from 1st Year Group

5:00 - 5:30 pm

APPL course debrief

5:30 -7:00 pm

Fellowship & Job Fair

2026 APPL Faculty

Walter Frontera, MD, PhD; University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine

- Professor, Physical Medicine, Rehabilitation, and Sports Medicine
- Professor, Physiology, University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine
- Editor-in-Chief, American Journal of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- walter.frontera@upr.edu

Nneka Ifejika, MD, MPH; Ochsner Health, New Orleans, LA

- Chief Scientific Officer and Cerebrovascular Physiatrist, Ochsner Health System
- Interim Associate Dean of Research, Xavier Ochsner College of Medicine
- Ferber Family of Houma Endowed Research Chair, Ochsner Health System
- Adjunct Professor, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, UT Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, Texas
- Director, Stroke Outcomes and Continuum of Care Research (SOCCR) Lab
- AAP Medical student mentorship program and recipient of AAP Early Career Academician Award, 2019
- nneka.ifejika@ochsner.org

David Morgenroth, MD; University of Washington/ VA Puget Sound

- Professor and Vice Chair for Research, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Washington; Associate Program Director, Amputation Rehabilitation Fellowship, VA Puget Sound, Core Investigator, VA Center for Limb Loss and Mobility
- Staff Physician, VA Puget Sound Health Care System
- Former AAP Board of Trustees member for 7 years; Currently Chair of AAP Elevating Research Task Force as well as member of AAP Governance Committee, RMSTP Advisory Board, and Psychiatry Foundation Board
- dmorgen@uw.edu

Vu Nguyen, MD, MBA; University of Alabama at Birmingham

- Robert B. Kyle Endowed Professor and Chair, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Heersink School of Medicine, UAB Medicine
- ABPMR Director and North American Representative, ISPRM Executive Council
- vqnguyen@uabmc.edu

Bill Niehaus, MD; University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine

- Chief Innovation Catalyst for CU PM&R
- Outpatient Medical Director of University of Colorado Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department - Anschutz Medical Campus
- PAL graduate
- william.niehaus@cuanschutz.edu

Dan Pierce, MD; University of Nebraska Medical Center

- Assistant Professor and Medical Student Director, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- AMA Young Physicians Section Delegate
- dapierce@unmc.edu

Chris Rorick, MPA; Polsinelli

- Senior Policy Advisor, Health Care and Health Science Policy
- crorick@polsinelli.com

Chloe Slocum, MD, MPH; Spaulding Rehabilitation/Harvard Medical School

- Director of Health Policy, Spaulding Rehabilitation
- Assistant Professor and Associate Chair for Quality, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Harvard Medical School
- Associate Director of the AAP Advocacy & Public Policy Leadership Program
- CSLOCUM@MGH.HARVARD.EDU

Brittany Snider, DO; Mayo Clinic Rochester

- Senior Associate Consultant
- Vice Chair, ASCIP Advocacy Committee
- AAP Medical Student Council Secretary; MSSCE Program Director (2-24 – 2025)
- snider.brittany@mayo.edu

Gwendolyn Sowa, MD, PhD; University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

- Professor and Chair, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- Co-Director, Ferguson Laboratory for Orthopaedic and Spine Research, University of Pittsburgh
- Director, UPMC Rehabilitation Institute
- AJPMR Editorial Board, Research Capacity Task Force; ISPRM planning committee
- sowaga@upmc.edu

David Steinberg; University of Utah Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

- Chair, Department of PM&R, University of Utah
- Executive Medical Director, Craig H. Neilsen Rehabilitation Hospital
- Chair of the AAP Chairs Council
- Chair of the AAP Presidential Task Force on Strengthening PM&R
- david.steinberg@hsc.utah.edu

Greg Worsowicz, MD, MBA; Mayo Clinic Florida

- Consultant, Mayo Clinic Jacksonville
- Medical Director Inpatient Rehab Services
- Director of the AAP Advocacy & Public Policy Leadership Program
- worsowicz.gregory@mayo.edu

Aaron Yang, MD; Vanderbilt Stallworth Rehab Hospital

- Associate Professor, Vice Chair for Faculty Development
- Associate Residency Program Director
- Medical Director of Musculoskeletal Medicine at Concierge Medicine
- aaronjayyang@gmail.com

Additional Physiatry '26 Sessions –

Washington Update Year-in-Review: What You Need to Know. Past, Present, Future.

Thursday February 19, 8:15 AM – 9:15 AM

Greg Worsowicz, MD, MBA; Clinton Faulk, MD; Chris Rorick, MPA; Chloe Slocum, MD, MPH

Is it GME (funding or positions), research (direct or indirect funding), advocacy (how and where), or another HOT issue facing our field? Join this panel of experts for a year-in-review of Washington and legislative updates on the issues that have and will impact the field of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Learn about what has happened, what is about to happen, and future legislative/regulatory items that academic physiatrists need to understand.

Reaching the Dean's Office

Friday, February 20, 8:15 AM – 9:15 AM

Ross Zafonte, DO; Raj Mitra, MD

Learners in academic medicine often focus on clinical, research, and teaching responsibilities without fully understanding the institutional priorities that shape their environment. This session bridges that gap by exploring the internal dynamics of academic leadership—financial realities, fundraising pressures, success metrics, and research priorities. Gaining this insight empowers learners to navigate their careers more strategically and align their goals with institutional expectations. Through presentations, Q&A with leaders, and case-based discussions, participants will learn how decisions are made at the leadership level and how to contribute meaningfully to their institution's mission while preparing for future leadership roles.

From Advocacy to Action: Engaging Learners in Activism to Build and Expand a PM&R Career

Saturday, February 21, 10:15 AM – 11:15 AM

Monica Verduzco-Gutierrez, MD; John Sanchez, MD, MPH; Ashlee Jaffee, MD, Med; Kayleigh D. Crane, BS; Lisa Y. Gong, BS, MA; Grace Olson, BA, MA; Rekha P. Swamy, BA

Advocacy is a powerful tool for shaping the future of rehabilitation medicine, improving patient outcomes, advancing health policy, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Engaging learners in activism not only enhances their education but also opens doors for career growth in academic medicine, leadership, and policy. This session will explore how physiatrists can incorporate advocacy training into education, inspire learners to take action, and leverage activism to build fulfilling careers. Panelists will share personal journeys, discuss successful strategies, and guide participants in mapping their own career paths through advocacy-driven work.