

# AAP VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK 2025



Association of Academic Physiatrists

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## Welcome

Thank you for volunteering with AAP! AAP volunteers are an essential part of the organization providing support in efforts to improve the specialty. In recent years, more than 500 members have volunteered with AAP. They built new connections with others in the field, gave their careers a boost, learned new skills, and impacted the society and Physiatry.

We offer leadership volunteering opportunities year-round. Each summer, we recruit new volunteers to serve on our Board of Trustees and Committees. Throughout the year, you can also serve by becoming a mentor, reviewing abstracts, volunteering at our Annual Meeting, and more.



## About AAP

### AAP History

In 1967, William Erdman, MD, Chair of the Department of PM&R at the University of Pennsylvania was elected as the AAP's first President. The first constitution was created and the Association of Academic Physiatrists' objectives focused on methods of undergraduate and graduate teaching of the art and science of physical medicine and rehabilitation; improving academic programs in this medical specialty; becoming the representative specialty group to the Council on Academic Societies, Association of American Medical Colleges; and representing the academic community of physical medicine and rehabilitation on the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

The original standing committees were Membership, Scientific Program, Nominating, By-Laws and Finance. In 1970, the AAP published its first issue of its newsletter, now called *Physiatry Forward*. At that time, the AAP had 64 active members from a potential of 171. In 1987, the AAP launched its medical journal – the *American Journal of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation*.

From 1968 to 1992, the AAP grew to more than 1,000 members. Since the early days, the AAP has launched new programs to support education, research, and leadership development. It has also now grown to a membership of more than 1,800 members in 24 countries.

### **Mission & Vision**

To empower academic physiatrists to advance the science of physical medicine and rehabilitation, educate leaders of the future, and champion physiatry to transform healthcare.

To create a thriving, global, academic community leveraging mentorship, leadership, and scholarship to maximize human function.

### **AAP's Strategic Goals**

1. Enhance the Impact of Physiatry in Academic Institutions: Create, strengthen, and integrate rehabilitation departments and divisions within academic institutions by enhancing education, faculty promotion, and research capacity.
2. Foster Community within Academic Physiatry: Grow a global academic physical and rehabilitation medicine community while supporting personalized, small-group networking and thematic professional connections.
3. Develop and Support Leaders of the Future: Cultivate skilled and diverse leaders to expand and deepen the influence of academic physiatry.
4. Facilitate the Growth and Success of Academic Physiatrists: Foster a culture of academic development to enable and inspire each individual to achieve their professional goals.
5. Champion Physiatry to Transform Healthcare: Shape, disseminate, and promote innovative and impactful rehabilitation research and education.

## Committees

### Committee Member Expectations

- AAP committee members must be an active AAP member and remain a member for the duration of the term.
- All committee members serve a 2-year term that may be renewed one time for a second 2-year term.
- Volunteers may only serve on one committee at a time.
- Committees meet 6 – 12 times per year via videoconference with an in-person meeting at the AAP's Annual Meeting.
  - Committee members are asked to attend a majority (more than 75%) of committee meetings
  - Participants are expected to keep their cameras on during calls unless there is a safety concern or an exceptional circumstance.
- Committee members may be asked to participate in project work outside of committee meetings.

### Diversity & Community Engagement (DEI) Committee

Meetings – First Monday at 4 pm ET / 3 pm CT & In-Person at AAP Meeting

Chair – Sheital Bavishi, DO, Ohio State University

Staff Liaison – Catherine Ragsdale, [cragdsdale@physiatry.org](mailto:cragdsdale@physiatry.org)

The **Diversity & Community Engagement (DEI) Committee** works to advance inclusion and equality within the AAP and the field of physiatry by providing resources and educational opportunities. Current committee projects are focused on Social Media Posts, Generating Proposals and Articles relating to DEI in PM&R, and Developing Resource and Speaker materials. The committee also hosts a DEI mixer at the AAP Annual Meeting.

### Education Committee

Meetings – Second Thursday at 8 pm ET / 7 pm CT & In-Person at AAP Meeting

Chair – Leslie Rydberg, Shirley Ryan AbilityLab

Staff Liaison – Candace Street, [cstreet@physiatry.org](mailto:cstreet@physiatry.org), and Jewel Fossett, [jfossett@physiatry.org](mailto:jfossett@physiatry.org)

The **Education Committee** plays a pivotal role in advancing the educational needs of its members and the broader academic physiatry community. The committee is dedicated to developing high-quality educational

content and professional development resources that support the ongoing growth of physiatrists in academic and clinical settings such as *Physiatry* Nxt 2024, Disability Integration Toolkit, Qbank, and Essential Articles.

Committee members work within sub-committees and small groups to complete education committee assignments as needed. This may include creating, reviewing, and revising educational content for the AAP virtual campus, including webinars, curriculum, podcasts, and training materials as needed. The Education Committee will also assist the Program Committee as needed with abstract reviews for the Annual Meeting. Time commitment to complete committee work is approximately 2 hours monthly.

### Global Academic Physiatry (GAPS) Subcommittee

Meetings – Monthly & In-Person at AAP Meeting

Chair – Maya Therattil, MD, Drexel University College of Medicine

Staff Liaison – Candace Street, [cstreet@physiatry.org](mailto:cstreet@physiatry.org)

The **Global Academic Physiatry (GAPS) Subcommittee** works closely with the Education Committee and works to expand education, research, and leadership opportunities in academic physiatry on an international level through the creation of partnerships and providing speakers to international organizations. Committee members work within small groups on committee assignments as needed. The time commitment is approximately 1 hour monthly. Projects include review and selection of speakers for GAPS invitations and the creation of curriculum and lecture content for requests from international organizations.

### Governance

Meetings – In-person on Wednesday before the annual meeting & 1 – 2 more times per year based on polls

Chair – Pablo Celnik, MD, PhD, Shirley Ryan AbilityLab

Staff Liaison – Tiffany Knowlton, [tknowlton@physiatry.org](mailto:tknowlton@physiatry.org)

The **Governance Committee** oversees the administrative functioning of the association, including financial positioning, legal documents, policies, and procedures. The committee is responsible for reviewing the AAP annual financial audit and are the first reviewers for any proposed bylaw changes. AAP policies are reviewed over a 4-to-5-year period with approximately 10 policies reviewed each year by the Governance Committee. The committee also determines if there is money to provide bonuses for the AAP staff.

### Leadership Development & Recognition Committee (LDRC)

Meetings – Second Tuesday at 6:30 pm ET / 5:30 pm CT & In Person at AAP Meeting

Chair – Karen Kowalske, MD, UT Southwestern Medical Center

Staff Liaison – Amy Schnappinger, [aschnappinger@physiatry.org](mailto:aschnappinger@physiatry.org)

The **Leadership Development & Recognition Committee (LDRC)** develops and recognizes leadership within the association by reviewing volunteer applications, filling committee openings, and selecting annual award

recipients. The committee also updates relevant committee/ awards policies and all review criteria as needed. LDRC members should be an AAP member for a minimum of four years and have past experience serving on an AAP council or committee.

All committee members are expected to participate in the major review projects for award nominations, Board of Trustees volunteers, and committee volunteers. This includes the review and discussion calls for awards and BOT volunteers, plus interviews for BOT candidates. Time commitment for the different review projects is approximately 4 hours, but may vary depending on the number of applications to be reviewed.

Other review projects may include ORR, RRC, and ABPMR volunteers. In addition, the LDRC reviews the applications for the Resident Fellows Council and Medical Student Council Vice Chair positions. These may be conducted by a smaller subcommittee depending on the number of applications.

## Membership Subcommittee

Meetings – First Wednesday at 6 pm ET / 5 pm CT & In-Person at AAP Meeting

Chair – Sara Huss, MD, Albany Medical Center

Staff Liaison – Catherine Ragsdale, [cragdsdale@physiatry.org](mailto:cragdsdale@physiatry.org)

The **Membership Subcommittee** works to increase membership in the AAP through recruitment efforts and ensuring the value of membership through programs, publications, and professional development opportunities. Current committee projects include Lapsed and New Member Outreach, Development of Membership Materials, and Review and Approval of PM&R Student Fair Grants.

## Program Subcommittee

Meetings – Second Tuesday at 7 pm ET / 6 pm CT & In-Person at AAP Meeting

Chair – Shanti Pinto, MD, UT Southwestern Medical Center

Staff Liaison – Candace Street, [cstreet@physiatry.org](mailto:cstreet@physiatry.org), and Beth Zacharias, [bzacharias@physiatry.org](mailto:bzacharias@physiatry.org)

The **Program Subcommittee** develops scientific and education programs of the association. Committee members suggest speakers and topics for upcoming Annual Meeting sessions, recommend plenary speakers for the meeting, and assist in moderating scientific paper presentation sessions at the Annual Meeting. Additional committee activities include:

- Assist in the development of sessions for the Annual Meeting and review session proposals in March. Time commitment is approximately 2 hours.
- Review and judge abstract submissions in October and December. Time commitment approximately is approximately 3 hours.
- Work within a smaller committee groups to assist in program committee assignments as needed. Time commitment approximately 1 hour monthly.



## Public Policy Committee

Meetings – First Friday at 1 pm ET / 12 pm CT

Chair – Venu Akuthota, MD, University of Colorado

Staff Liaison – Tiffany Knowlton, [tknowlton@physiatry.org](mailto:tknowlton@physiatry.org)

The **Public Policy Committee** advocates the interests of the AAP regarding policies, laws, regulations and other public policy developments such as graduate medical education, undergraduate medical education, and research funding through a variety of efforts, including Capitol Hill visits to meet with Congressional leaders.

The committee meets at the AAP Annual Meeting based on when the Public Policy session is scheduled. It is usually a quick hour for a meet and greet and a review of current issues.

Public Policy has a second in-person meeting usually in September where the committee does Hill visits. The AAP pays reasonable costs to fly members to DC. The AAP lobbying firm does Hill trainings and accompanies members to Hill visits.

## Research Committee

Meetings – First Monday at 5 pm ET / 4 pm CT & In-person at the AAP Annual Meeting

Chair – W. David Arnold, MD, University of Missouri

Staff Liaison – Amy Schnappinger, [aschnappinger@physiatry.org](mailto:aschnappinger@physiatry.org)

The **Research Committee** supports individuals and organizations interested in growing and improving their research programs. These include education, resources, advocacy, and outreach. Current committee projects include

- Develop and lead sessions for AAP Annual Meeting, including Research Leader Networking session
- Review and provide content research-focused educational content for the AAP Virtual Campus and other association programs, such as the Badge Project
- Select the winner for the AAP's Carolyn Braddom Ritzler Research Award
- Submit comments on behalf of AAP for relevant requests from funding agencies and other organizations



## Councils

The AAP has several councils focused on different career stages, professional role, and practice settings. They are open to all members based on the focus of the council. Most have meetings or sessions at the AAP Annual Meeting, as well as on-going projects throughout the year.

### Administrative Directors Council

[Administrative Directors Council](#) members are tasked with addressing and overseeing business issues within academic PM&R programs including health care reform, finance management, physician compensation, productivity metrics, research management, career development, strategic planning, operational success and more. Every year at the AAP's Annual Meeting, the Administrative Directors Council puts together workshops and sessions designed to help develop the skills, resources, and mindset to succeed. This includes a workshop and social event that joins department leaders – Chairs & Administrative Directors – to learn and network together.

### Department Chairs & Division Chiefs Council

The AAP's [Chair Council](#) is a group of Department Chairs and Division Chiefs of an ACGME-approved PM&R program. All AAP members that meet the qualifications are automatic members of this community. The mission is to work with the AAP to create the future of academic physiatry through mentorship, leadership and discovery. The council offers opportunities for Chairs and Chiefs to communicate important information, generate ideas, alert the appropriate people to critical issues, and provide collegial support.

### Junior Faculty Council

The [Junior Faculty Council](#) is a resource for year-round personal and professional development opportunities for AAP members who graduated from a Resident or Fellow program within the past seven years. The council works closely alongside our colleagues sharpening our skills and training. In addition, Early Career members provide an important membership voice to the AAP.

### Medical Student Educators Council

The AAP's [Medical Student Educators Council](#) is a group of physiatrists who focus on educating and engaging medical students in innovative ways regarding rehabilitation, disability and advocacy. All AAP members who meet the qualifications are welcome to be members of the council. The council offers opportunities for anyone interested in medical education and enhancing PM&R in their home institution to communicate important information, generate ideas, bring attention to critical issues and provide collegial support.

## Medical Student Council

The [Medical Student Council's](#) mission is to provide meaningful opportunities for premedical and medical students to explore the field of physiatry. The council facilitates engaging activities, distributes valuable learning resources, coordinates mentorship connections, advocates for students, and fosters an international community of those who are passionate about physical medicine and rehabilitation.

## PM&R Program Coordinators Council

The [Program Coordinators Council](#) was created to support the unique needs of coordinators, offering year-round collaboration, camaraderie, and idea-sharing to help programs and residents grow. The AAP Program Coordinators host a listserv, AAP Annual Meeting sessions, and more as part of their strong and supportive community.

## Residency & Fellowship Program Directors Council

The AAP's [Residency & Fellowship Directors \(RFPD\) Council](#) is a group of Residency Program Directors, Fellowship Program Directors, and Co-Directors of an ACGME-approved PM&R program. The council offers opportunities for Program Directors to communicate important information, generate ideas, alert the appropriate people to critical issues, and provide collegial support.

## Resident & Fellows Council

The AAP's [Resident/ Fellow Council \(RFC\)](#) is every in-training physiatrists' resource for year-round personal and professional development opportunities. The council has representatives on every AAP committee and subcommittee working alongside leaders in the field to ensure trainees have a voice in every level of the AAP. In addition, they plan the AAP Annual Meeting resident/ fellow track and networking night, provide mentorship to medical students, and much more.

## Veterans Affairs Council

The [Veterans Affairs Council](#) comes together at the AAP's Annual Meeting every year for camaraderie, idea sharing and learning. Being a Veterans Affairs (VA) physiatrist means embracing the "I CARE" culture of core values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence. Every day, you demonstrate dedication to our mission to serve Veterans who have experienced a wide spectrum of physical and emotional challenges. Helping them through their struggle is our collective triumph. At the VA, we have access to some of the most advanced technologies, can participate in cutting-edge research and education, and, most importantly, are uplifting America's greatest heroes. Whatever your motivation is for working for the VA, you need support and resources just like your patients.

## Staff Directory

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