

APTA Wisconsin Candidate Questions

Name and Credentials:

Connie Kittleson, PT, DPT

Education:

BS, Zoology, UW-Madison

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Employer and Position:

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DELEGATE

1. As an APTA Wisconsin Chapter representative at the APTA House of Delegates, how would you ensure that the voices and concerns of Chapter members are heard and considered in decision-making processes?

I have had the privilege of serving in a variety of positions for APTA Wisconsin and I believe that ensuring a diversity of voice within our leadership bodies is incredibly important so that we truly represent the varied concerns of our chapter members. As the current Chair of the Nominating Committee, I know that the committee considers this when slating candidates for the position of Delegate to the APTA House of Delegates and I encourage members to consider this when voting. I believe it is important for each delegate to consider motions from the perspective of how they influence all our members. Therefore, we want to make sure that our members have the opportunity to learn about the motions before the House and to bring motion concepts forward for the delegation to consider. All APTA members have the opportunity to follow House discussions and make comments through the APTA Communities HUB online and our Chief Delegate provides updates to members at every conference. However, I think many members are generally unaware of the motions being debated at the national level. In addition to encouraging member engagement, I believe in specifically reaching out to members who can provide the much-needed diversity of voice. For example, if a motion greatly affects a member practicing in outpatient care, I would want to reach out to PTs and PTAs in that practice setting; if a motion specifically affects providers in rural areas, I would want to actively seek that perspective.

2. In your opinion, what are some of the most pressing issues facing the physical therapy profession today?

It is difficult to choose which issues are “most pressing” for the profession today as the issues affect our members differently. In the outpatient setting, decreasing reimbursement and increasing administrative burden are a tremendous threat to the profession. Our Chapter is trying to address this legislatively. APTA has helped provide resources including the report “The Economic Value of Physical Therapy in the United States”.

The cost of education and increasing student debt is still of great concern. I know that this is not unique to our profession, and I applaud organizations and programs that have been making efforts to make DPT and PTA education more affordable and therefore more accessible. We have been trending toward increased specialization which can lead to increased depth of knowledge and potentially expansion of practice, but we want to make sure that the paths to specialization are affordable.

Lastly, I believe truly defining who we are and what value we bring to healthcare is incredibly important. We have made great strides in internally identifying that we are movement specialists across the continuum of care and across the lifespan, but we face challenges in getting the public to think of us first for all their movement needs. Protection and expansion of our scope of practice is important, as is fostering relationships. I believe being more publicly visible would help. I would like to see APTA support members to be more engaged in community boards and running for public office. We need our members sitting at the tables where decisions are made that affect our patients – including such things as legislation and the accessibility of our communities.

3. Collaboration is key in representing a diverse constituency at the APTA House of Delegates. Can you describe a successful collaborative effort you have been a part of in the past and how you contributed to its success?

As a previous delegate, a board member, and a committee member for numerous APTA Wisconsin Committees, I have participated in many collaborative efforts. The most recent large collaborative initiative in which I participated was as a part of the Nominating Committee (NC). In a relatively short period of time, the NC has undertaken 4 initiatives related to bylaws, policies and procedures, candidate recruitment, and leadership development. As the NC Chair I created online documents on a google drive to begin discussions on each of these topics. I then coordinated monthly meetings to tackle each of these topics one at a time encouraging input from all committee members as well as collecting input from various Board members. I helped to facilitate the delegation of some of the components of work between meetings to ensure steady progress and then brought the completed work before the entire committee for refinement and adoption. This has resulted in a consensus from the NC to improve the expectations of the committee and to ensure a timely election from a diverse slate of highly qualified candidates. We are now focusing on helping members achieve their personal leadership goals while ensuring a leadership pipeline for our chapter.