

DELEGATE

Name: Michael Cropes

Credentials: PT, DPT, OCS

Education:

University of Iowa (B.S. Human Physiology)

Northwestern University (Doctor of Physical Therapy)

Employer and Position:

University of Wisconsin-Madison DPT Program, Teaching Faculty

1. What skills and experiences qualify you to serve as a Chapter Delegate?

Throughout my career, I've continually pursued professional development opportunities including rigorous training in the UW Health and UnityPoint Health-Meriter Orthopedic Physical Therapy Residency Program as well as the Northwestern University Fellowship in Advanced Orthopedic Physical Therapy Practice, Research and Education. I've regularly attended conferences held by the APTA and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists (AAOMPT) to remain current on professional trends and key issues. I have valuable background experience working within diverse leadership teams and advocating for the physical therapy profession. I serve as a clinical team lead in my multidisciplinary health system, campaigning for the best interests of physical therapy staff and the patients we serve. I regularly collaborate with faculty colleagues to address challenges facing our DPT Program and the greater physical therapy profession. I also serve as a liaison between my Program and the UW-Madison Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education, partnering with leaders from multiple health professions programs to develop educational programming consistent with the "Quintuple Aim" of improved patient experiences, improved clinician experiences, better clinical outcomes, health equity, and lower costs. Additionally, I serve on the AAOMPT Practice Affairs Committee, a group that engages in educational, legislative and regulatory efforts to promote the scope of practice of physical therapists.

2. How do you envision the role of an APTA Wisconsin Delegate?

I envision the Delegate as a conduit between the APTA and every Wisconsin PT and PTA. The Delegate must be committed to clearly understanding and conveying all stakeholders' values, beliefs, and concerns. I believe it's the Delegate's responsibility to be transparent with their own personal and professional biases, and to openly welcome and engage with opposing views and opinions. Ultimately, the Delegate's actions should be rooted in a pursuit of the abovementioned "Quintuple Aim".

3. Are there particular issues facing the profession currently that will require leadership by APTA Wisconsin Delegates?

Clinician burnout is a key issue facing our profession, with negative implications for PTs, PTAs, and the communities we serve. Delegates must work to address the multiple complex drivers of PT/PTA burnout, including high workloads, wage concerns, documentation demands, and unsatisfactory reimbursement structures.

The high cost of higher education presents an obstacle to many prospective PT/PTA students, and it leaves many graduates with significant financial stressors. Delegates should support the development of innovative strategies to reduce student debt burden while maintaining rigorous academic standards.

Finally, while I'm proud to see a growing number of underrepresented minority students being accepted into physical therapy programs, the racial and ethnic diversity of the U.S. physical therapy workforce still does not reflect the diversity of the communities whom we serve. As our profession navigates a broader sociopolitical climate marked by divisiveness, I believe APTA Wisconsin Delegates must be champions for equitable physical therapy admissions and employment practices.