

Name and Credentials: Lindsay Dolan PT, DPT

Education: UW-Madison

Employer and Position: AMN Healthcare - Contract PT currently at Prevea Therapy Institute

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?

It is the priority of delegates to hear the voices and concerns of their associated chapter. In Wisconsin, we are fortunate to have robust APTA-WI leadership who represent across the state. Personally, I am an active member and make an effort to attend all conferences and leadership meetings and therefore am exposed and network with a variety of members. Additionally, I am a traveling physical therapist where I accept short term contracts around the country. Most of my contracts have been in rural WI and it has been a great opportunity to connect with physical therapists and physical therapist assistants to expand my network. Having this diverse network, most understand my involvement in the APTA-WI and feel comfortable approaching me with their concerns or ideas.

Additionally, as an alternate delegate this cycle, we implemented new Town Halls in order to give our members updates on the topics being shared at the House of Delegates. In turn, they are able to express their ideas or concerns. This was an excellent idea to implement and we hope to continue and grow in order to ensure the voices and concerns of our members are considered in the decision making process.

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

I believe the most pressing issues facing the physical therapy profession today include payment, burn out, student loans, administrative burden, and the integration/utilization of artificial intelligence (AI). I see these issues all related: without appropriate payment, therapists don't receive the proper income to pay off student debt and are also being overworked by administrative burden and therefore leads to burn out.

With new technology and safe integration of AI, we can help reduce some burden placed on therapists, however monitoring and appropriate utilization is key. We also continue to fight for payment at the national and state level. A part of the payment battle comes from the insurance reimbursement, though we as physical therapists have a duty to demonstrate our worth and practice at the top of our scope. These above issues are currently being addressed at the national and state level through legislative battles and will be discussed at the 2025 House of Delegates.

Personally, I find the state of our entire healthcare system a pressing issue. Instead of this current “sick” care system, we must find a way to recreate a new system with a focus on prevention. Currently, I am working as an outpatient physical therapist in northern Wisconsin. It is clear the way we have historically “treated” patients is unethical. Most of the patients I care for are of advanced age, white, overweight, diabetic with hypertension and likely additional cardiac or pulmonary concerns. We cannot wholly blame these patients for the state they are in now, though we do need to rethink their healthcare and address the next generation with a different lens. If we intervened earlier in their life and incorporated better habits focusing on prevention, we would likely see a much healthier population. Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants are in a great position to lead the charge on this revamped system. We should be at the forefront ready to lead, guide, and educate. It is my dream and passion to see this in my lifetime.

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?

While in physical therapy school, I had the wonderful opportunity to collaborate with the APTA WI State Government Affairs (SGA) committee. I was asked to testify several times in front of lawmakers at the Wisconsin State Capitol. The APTA WI SGA committee along with our lobbyists coordinated the bulk of the effort and crafted the language of these bills, but they required individuals to testify. Testifying included preparing a script to help describe and explain to government officials (who may not know anything about physical therapy) the purpose and benefits behind these laws.

We advocated to the Senate Health Committee on Senate Bill 39: The Physical Therapy Interstate Compact. I was able to communicate the importance of the PT compact and offer a personal touch as a hopeful travel PT who would use the PT Compact to help fulfill healthcare needs across the country. We were successful in passing that bill in the senate and therefore had the opportunity to testify in front of the House Assembly Committee on Health for Assembly Bill 438 regarding the compact as well as Assembly Bill 581 which was proposed to help clarify ‘supervision’ of a student of physical therapy assistant and student physical therapist. From meeting to discuss the issue, testifying to each body of government, being present watching Governor Evers sign the Compact Bill to law, and now currently using the PT Compact as a traveling physical therapist across the country is incredibly rewarding. The effort of the APTA WI SGA committee along with our lobbyists displayed a successful collaboration that benefited Wisconsin PTs and PTAs.