

APTA Wisconsin Candidate Questions

NOTE: Please use [APTA Format](#) when listing credentials.

Please list:

Samuel O'Melia, PT, DPT
Board-Certified Clinical Specialist in Orthopaedic Physical Therapy
Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist

Bachelor of Science in Exercise Physiology (2018; Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI)
Doctor of Physical Therapy (2020; Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI)
UW Hospitals and Clinics and UnityPoint Health – Meriter Orthopedic Physical Therapy Residency (2021; Madison, WI)

Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin
Physical Therapist

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?

As an APTA Wisconsin representative, I would collaborate with my fellow delegates in reaching out to our state chapter members directly and frequently. This would be in the form of opportunities for members surveys, as well as hosting further HOD Town Hall events in which state chapter members can make their voices heard and where open dialogue is encouraged. It's essential as state delegates to recognize that our duty is to appropriately represent the chapter members in our state as intended. This is best accomplished through conversation and making efforts to gather a well-rounded and diverse impression of members' thoughts, concerns and experiences.

Whether regarding an already slated HOD motion, or in encouraging members to bring forth other pressing motions from the state of Wisconsin, I will lead with a focus on what matters most to our members. I've been successful in doing so as a current state chapter leader with APTA Alaska, where I serve as Vice President and coordinate our chapter's educational programs and monthly meetings. I've reached out to all member contingents and sub-specialists within our geographically vast and diverse state, and developed surveys to gather feedback as to how to best tailor programming to their needs and expectations as active members in our profession.

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

Of the utmost importance to our profession at this time is improving reimbursement for skilled services provided by our active clinicians. Cuts to CMS services and private payers continue to have a stranglehold on the health of our profession, by nature of a sequelae of negative effects such as: greater demands on private practices and health systems, increased clinician burnout, challenges in implementing evidence-based care amidst more stringent fiscal responsibilities, and stagnant salaries while there is rising cost of an entry-level DPT education. It starts from the top with advocating for our profession, and it starts from the only Association that is truly looking out for the integrity of our profession: the APTA.

With that being said, we need to bolster our lobbying power as a profession to have a stronger legislative impact. During my time as a national APTA Association Leadership Scholar in 2023, my cohort discovered more about the inner workings of the Association at large. On the forefront of the minds of our leadership has been increasing membership within the APTA, and this will continue to be a necessary emphasis both currently and in the future. With greater engagement within the APTA, there is greater potential from an advocacy perspective. Cultivating an atmosphere of empowerment and collaboration between students, new graduates, and seasoned clinicians/professionals via the APTA is vital for the physical therapy profession moving forward.

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 member of a team, I take pride in providing the opportunity for others to achieve their highest potential. Whether collaborating towards a common goal, or tabling new ideas as a group, I find it essential to consider all viewpoints and allow for others to fully engage within the team in order to enhance our overall intent. More recently, I'd been able to develop my abilities in this area via my role on the Board of Directors for the APTA Alaska Physical Therapy Community Clinic.

As one of the individuals to originally help create this entity in 2022, I've collaborated closely with the rest of our Board of Directors to achieve our goal of opening the clinic as a valuable asset to the Alaska healthcare community. This clinic has been a first-of-its-kind for the APTA and in the landscape of pro bono care in the United States, in that it's completely affiliated and supported by the APTA Alaska state chapter. In the early discussions for its development, I took the initiative to talk with our state chapter leadership and offer to help push this idea forward for the betterment of the

community. Our six-person board established Article of Incorporation and bylaws for our non-profit entity, and we each brought forth a unique variety of skills for which we were quickly and efficiently able to develop this clinic and begin seeing patients in less than 6 months. Shortly thereafter, it was determined by my colleagues that I was best suited to be the inaugural Clinic Director, given my strong communication skills within our board, within the community, and in recruiting clinicians/admin for this 100% volunteer-based entity. The Community Clinic is now a staple for pro bono care in many parts of the state of Alaska, and our blueprint for establishment has been published in APTA Magazine amongst other online resources for which more APTA state chapters could replicate these efforts.