The Academy Leadership Program was established by your Board of Governors in 2012 to identify a select number of diverse, emerging member leaders and help prepare them to lead the Academy and the specialty through the coming changes in the health care environment. The Board committed significant financial resources and coordinated necessary infrastructure—a Selection Committee and an Oversight Committee—within the existing infrastructure to ensure support for and integration of the Leadership Program. In January 2013, the call for applications was launched, announcing:

“No leadership experience is required, but the program requires applicants who demonstrate interest, energy, and commitment. In return, the selected individuals will experience unprecedented access and exposure to the Academy Board of Governors and Academy initiatives. Because of the access and training afforded by this program, only a limited number of members will be selected to participate.

Selected individuals will be taken through a 2-year curriculum that introduces them to association leadership, strategic planning, media skills, Academy governance, products, and services, and volunteer leadership. The program expects a steady stream of commitment, communication, and accountability from participants without being overwhelming.”

The response to the call for emerging leaders has been overwhelming—more than 80 applications to fill 10 slots every 2 years! The Selection Committee works hard on its difficult task of choosing 10 candidates for each Leadership Program class, and each class has been determined and exceptional beyond expectations. We look forward to seeing all of their successes and accomplishments!

“Our inaugural class set a very high bar for classes to come, in terms of commitment and post-program impact. Listed below are these extraordinary Leadership Fellows and just some of their volunteer positions of influence.

- Michele Arnold, MD, FAAPMR
  Swedish Spine Sports and Musculoskeletal Medicine
  Nominating Committee
  Membership Committee

- Deborah Bergfeld, MD, FAAPMR
  Seton Brain and Spine Institute
  Performance Metrics Committee

- Charles Dillard, MD, FAAPMR
  Children’s Hospital of The King’s Daughters
  Membership Committee

- Erik Ensrud, MD, FAAPMR
  OHSU Orthopedics and Rehabilitation
  Pain Medicine/Neuromuscular Medicine Member Council Leader

- Kevin Fitzpatrick, MD, FAAPMR
  Mount Vernon Rehabilitation Medicine Associates
  Evidence Committee

- Marlis Gonzalez-Fernandez, MD, PhD, FAAPMR
  Johns Hopkins University
  Evidence Committee

- Nneka Ifejika, MD, MPH, FAAPMR
  The University of Texas Health Science Center
  Health Policy & Legislation Committee

- D.J. Kennedy, MD, FAAPMR
  Stanford University
  Board of Governors, Member-at-Large

- Deepthi Saxena, MD, FAAPMR
  Lafayette Regional Rehabilitation Hospital
  Chair Elect, General & Medical Rehabilitation Member Council

- Jennifer Zumsteg, MD, FAAPMR
  University of Washington
  Chair, Health Policy & Legislation Committee

Visit [www.aapmr.org/leadershipprogram](http://www.aapmr.org/leadershipprogram) to learn more.
A second class of diverse and talented Academy Leadership Fellows is now completing the program. Coming off a robust session of Capitol Hill visits to advocate for the specialty, this unique and impressive class will continue the commitment of taking talents and intensive leadership training to key volunteer positions of influence.

Shane Burr, MD, FAAPMR
The Physician Network
Reimbursement and Policy Review Committee

Alexios Carayannopoulos, DO, FAAPMR
Comprehensive Spine Center Evidence Committee

Mehul Desai, MD, MPH, FAAPMR
International Spine, Pain & Performance Center Corporate Relations Committee

Carl Gelfius, MD, FAAPMR, FAANEM
Ohio State University Health Policy & Legislation Committee

Corinne Layne-Stuart, DO, FAAPMR
West Virginia University Program Planning Committee

Annie Purcell, DO, FAAPMR
Redding Spine & Sports Medicine Chair, Reimbursement & Policy Review Committee

Jeffrey Radecki, MD, FAAPMR
Lehigh Valley Health Network Clinical Practice Guidelines Committee

Monica Rho, MD, FAAPMR
Shirley Ryan AbilityLab Graduate Medical Education Committee

Monica Verduzco-Gutierrez, MD, FAAPMR
The University of Texas Health Science Center Self-Assessment Examination Committee

Aurora Wong, MD, FAAPMR
North Mississippi Medical Center Membership Committee

With 2 complete and successful classes in its portfolio, the Academy Leadership Program announces the next class of Leadership Fellows.

Angela Beninga, DO, FAAPMR
Shepherd Center

David S. Cheng, MD, FAAPMR
Rush University Medical Center/Midwest Orthopaedics

Sarah M. Eickmeyer, MD, FAAPMR
University of Kansas Medical School

Keith J. Foster, MD, MBA, CPE, FAAPMR
Memorial Rehabilitation Institute

Sarah Hwang, MD, FAAPMR
University of Missouri

Ninad Karandikar, MD, FAAPMR
VA Palo Alto/Stanford University

Lennox McNeary, MD, FAAPMR
Carilion Clinic

David E. Reece, DO, FAAPMR
Walter Reed National Military Medical Center

Clarice Sinn, DO, MHA, FAAPMR
University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

Eric Wisotzky, MD, FAAPMR
MedStar National Rehabilitation Network

“This is truly an opportunity of a lifetime to help define the future of PM&R with the leaders of our field. As a young physiatrist, you get to make personal connections with our Academy’s leaders and make decisions that will impact the future of our specialty.”

—MONICA VERDUZCO-GUTIERREZ, MD, FAAPMR

“The Academy Leadership Program experience has yielded 9 new friends/colleagues with a similar interest in expanding our field. My advice is to just go for it. My mentors have always encouraged me to pursue opportunities—what’s the worst that could happen?”

—NNEKA IFEJIKA, MD, MPH, FAAPMR

“If you have a passion for PM&R and supporting the future of our specialty, consider applying! You’ll receive expert support and training in learning some of the hard skills of leadership and get to know a national diverse cohort of co-leaders as passionate about the long-term success of PM&R as you are.”

—JENNIFER ZUMSTEG, MD, FAAPMR