

Nneka L. Ifejika, MD, MPH, FAAPMR
Member-at-Large

Tell members a little bit about yourself.

Your practice

My practice is a combination of inpatient consultant and outpatient care as a cerebrovascular physiatrist and stroke outcomes research. I am the section chief of Stroke Rehabilitation at UT Southwestern Medical Center and a professor in three departments – Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Neurology and Population and Data Sciences.

Your life outside of work

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my extended family and friends, gardening and travel. I'm also into sustainability – particularly in the fashion and furniture industries. Most items that are placed in the trash or on the curb can find a second life through consignment, thrifting, antique and resale outlets.

What accomplishments/honors are you particularly proud of that you would like to share with members?

I'm honored to be part of amazing teams that improve the lives of patients with cerebrovascular disease. My life pretty much changed when I joined the UTHealth Stroke Team and continues to evolve here in Dallas at UT Southwestern. Without the team, I wouldn't be here.

What have you advanced in your local community outside of or in conjunction with your medical practice?

We participate in community engagement protocols as part of our Joint Commission Comprehensive Stroke Center certification. In 2021, we published a paper in JMIR detailing the results of two large-scale events. 2,774 health screenings were completed over 12 hours, averaging four health screenings per minute. Twenty multimedia placements using the Stomp out Stroke webpage, social media, #stompoutstroke, television, iQ radio and web-based news reached approximately 850,000 people in the Houston area.

What special skills or unique attributes do you bring to the Board?

As a former chair of the Health Policy and Legislation Committee, I've worked with the Board of Governors on issues that are pertinent to the AAAPM&R membership including telehealth, reimbursement, scope of practice, administrative burden and regulatory relief. Advocacy for what is important to our *members* remains at the forefront of my service to the Board.

What is a current or future challenge to the Academy or the specialty that you look forward to addressing as a Board Member?

Protecting our field from overlap from specialties juxtaposed to psychiatry is an active challenge. We have such a diverse and robust skill set, which has its pros and cons. It is imperative that we unite under the broad umbrella of PM&R. This is our home. We must look after it.

What have we not asked you that you think members should know about you?

Wow. I guess I want members to know that I'm just getting started (smile).