

Talya K. Fleming, MD, FAAPMR
Member, AAPM&R Nominating Committee

Tell members a little bit about yourself.

Your Practice

I am an academic physiatrist who practices physiatry with a passion for creating programs to improve healthcare delivery for post-acute care, neurorehabilitation and disparities in health equity. While maintaining dual board certification in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Brain Injury Medicine, I am the medical director of the Stroke Recovery Program, Post-COVID Rehabilitation Program, and Aftercare Programs at JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute in Edison, New Jersey. I am an associate professor of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at both Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine and Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. My practice combines direct clinical care, clinical research and teaching the next generation of rising healthcare professionals.

Your Life Outside of Work

I spend most of my time outside of work with my husband and two sons. Born and raised in New Jersey, I enjoy traveling, trying new foods and learning about different cultures. I love most types of music and enjoy an active physical lifestyle because we know – Exercise is Medicine™. You can always find me on the dance floor – combining my love for music, physical activity and fun!

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

Physiatry is truly the best specialty, and I am humbled by the privilege of being a physician each day. We are in the middle of a healthcare transformation, and while the unknown is ahead of us, we have a unique opportunity for creativity at its finest. By evolving the way we view the role of physiatry, we can position ourselves as the leaders in helping patients through their recovery journey and regaining their quality-of-life.

I enjoy thinking about medicine from a systems perspective and creating new programs and opportunities to optimize healthcare delivery. As co-creator and founding medical director of the Stroke Recovery Program at JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute, we built a framework for the post-stroke continuum of care that serves patients across transitions of care within various settings including the acute care hospital, inpatient rehabilitation facility, skilled nursing facility, long-term care acute hospital, home care and outpatient settings. Within this infrastructure, we deliver quality care by optimizing known neuro-rehabilitation strategies for functional recovery while also combining strategies for vascular risk factor reduction seen in cardiac rehabilitation. Our clinical research has shown that our approach improves function, reduces hospital readmissions, and improves mortality after stroke.

The future will require us all to be change-makers in different ways – for our patients, in our local medical community, and even on the national level. Being a part of AAPM&R, and its Multi-Disciplinary PASC (Post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2) Collaborative is a dynamic experience, and again, built on my experience of identifying a need within the healthcare system, then subsequently creating innovative solutions to fulfill that need with the inclusion of all groups.

What interests you about serving on the Academy's Nominating Committee?

Service is at the core of many aspects of our specialty. I am eager to support our members in recognizing and nominating appropriate candidates for advanced leadership positions responsible for the future direction of the Academy and our specialty.

What volunteer work or engagement with the Academy is in your portfolio?

In addition to my newest leadership role on AAPM&R's Nominating Committee, I am also the co-chair of the Academy's PM&R BOLD Steering Committee, Rehabilitation Care Continuum (RCC) practice area. For my clinical work, I am a member of AAPM&R's Exercise As Medicine Community group and AAPM&R's Multi-Disciplinary PASC (Post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2) Collaborative, developing consensus guidance statements and other resources for Long COVID. I am also an associate editor of *PM&R: The journal of injury, function and rehabilitation*. My work has been featured on AAPM&R's Online Learning Portal course, "How COVID-19 Informed the Future Impact of the Specialty of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Throughout the Health Care Continuum," and have presented multiple oral presentations and scientific abstracts at AAPM&R Annual Assemblies. I hope to continue to foster a culture of leadership and service within the Academy as we all work together to support each other and our patients.

