

Marlis Gonzalez-Fernandez, MD, FAAPMR

Member-at-Large

Tell us a little about yourself.

Your practice.

I am associate professor of PM&R-Orthopaedic surgery and vice chair for clinical affairs at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. I came to Johns Hopkins for research training after residency and have remained in the faculty since. My practice has evolved over the years from a general physiatry outpatient practice to primarily focusing on rehabilitation after limb loss. I have been heavily involved in research focusing on swallowing disorders after stroke and swallowing physiology. Most recently, I have been focusing on developing a new understanding of swallowing physiology and pathophysiology using 320-detector row CT scanning in collaboration with colleagues in Japan. In my administrative role, I am focused on the provision of clinical services through the continuum of care, starting at the acute hospital, through acute inpatient rehabilitation units, SAR facilities and outpatient settings. Although my primary clinical focus is the limb loss rehabilitation program, on any given day you can find me doing consults, attending one of our inpatient units, or seeing a variety of patient in the clinic who have amputations, chronic rehabilitation needs, or need botulinum toxin injections.

Your life outside of work.

I spend most of my time out of work with Justin, my husband of 22 years. We both like to cook; I own the oven, Justin the grill. We have recently become interested in gardening including some seasonal vegetables and many indoor plants, succulents and an indoor Meyer lemon tree (wish me luck!). I've always had an interest in architecture and interior design, so I like to plan and complete home projects.

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

I am most grateful for the opportunity to partner with patients to facilitate their road to recovery. It has been a privilege to partner with the multidisciplinary team caring for people after limb loss and supporting the growth of the program to provide comprehensive services. I am also thankful for the opportunity to do research in swallowing disorders from a rehabilitation perspective to inform a patient's overall treatment approach so that this problem is less of a hurdle for their participation in society and overall life enjoyment.

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

Our team has worked to facilitate our partnership with the Amputee Coalition. It has been a privilege to work with our team to develop the JH amputee support group. Most recently, we have been committed to awareness and advocacy with concerted efforts during Limb Loss awareness month (April). The team has worked to coordinate a variety of activities during the month to include adaptive sports, peer education activities, and a symposium where we share the best science available with colleagues, patients and their families.

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

My experiences thus far have provided me with a broad perspective on the specialty and the

contributions we make to medicine. My first-hand experience in most rehab settings while also being involved in research and my interactions with physiatrists outside of academia will help me be a better advocate for my peers. I enjoy learning from others to find common ground and foster positive change.

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

I am passionate about our specialty and the irreplaceable contributions we make to the health and well-being of the population. I am looking forward to advocating for the specialty and my peers so that the work we do is acknowledged and understood by our colleagues, other healthcare providers and the community.