

TOGETHER

Together, Let's Be Leaders in Advancing Diversity and Inclusion in Medicine

As AAPM&R leads the advancement of physiatry's impact throughout health care, we will model inclusion and embrace diverse backgrounds and perspectives of those with whom we work and serve.

The Academy is especially committed to creating space for the difficult conversations, hearing the voices least heard, and promoting policy and initiatives that support diversity and inclusion.

Without a doubt, physiatry is diverse—from the way it is practiced clinically, to the individual physicians, to the patient populations that physiatrists serve. For years the Academy has worked diligently to embrace this diversity, and be inclusive in our efforts to engage members and advance the specialty. As an example, the AAPM&R member profile features 20 clinical practice areas and 16 variations of practice settings to help the Academy understand the diverse ways physiatrists practice so we can better serve your needs. However, we also understand that embracing the power of diversity and inclusion requires us to push beyond clinical and practice definitions.

The Academy must actively evaluate its role in facilitating and advancing the individual perspectives within our specialty. This is critical, because as the Academy takes action to make the newly-defined vision a reality, we need all perspectives, all voices, and all members engaged and empowered within our organization. Together, we make physiatry stronger. Only together will we transform the specialty.

The demographic data the Academy collects is currently limited; it depends on self-reporting by members. The most robust, self-identified data is gender, yet we know this is only a single variable in our much broader commitment to diversity and inclusion. For instance, we have statistics on the gender of our Academy volunteers and leadership.

Women Represented in Physiatry and the Academy*

IN PHYSIATRY

35% of physiatrists

39% of physiatrists in-training

IN THE ACADEMY

36% of AAPM&R members

37% have expressed interest in volunteering

38% of AAPM&R committee members

25% of AAPM&R committee chairs (2018-2019)

38% of AAPM&R Board of Governors members (2018-2019)

50% of AAPM&R Leadership Fellows

35% of *PM&R* Journal editorial Board

AT THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

50% of Plenary speakers

31% of Annual Assembly Faculty

26% of Award nominees

27% of Award recipients

*Based on 2018 self-reported demographic data, unless otherwise noted above in parenthesis.



“Every voice and every perspective matter as we work together to advance the specialty and fulfill our vision. Further advancing our commitment to diversity and inclusion not only aligns to our core values as an organization, but our core values as a specialty. We are thrilled to see where these endeavors take us in 2019 and beyond.”

— Deborah Venesy, MD, FAAPMR, Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force

While this type of data—insights into proportion and representation—is important, it cannot be our only means for evaluating and improving upon our diversity and inclusion efforts. With the extreme diversity of our specialty (clinical, practice and personal demographics), “proportionate” metrics are not the optimal measurement. Not only do just 31% of our members self-report race/ethnicity, there are other equally important data points about which we currently do not know the appropriate means to ask. This simply indicates how deep we must go to fulfill our comprehensive commitment to embrace diversity and inclusion in the Academy. Statistics alone do not get at the root of the issue.

In 2018, the Academy engaged Alexis S. Terry, MBA, CDP, CAE, Senior Director, Diversity and Inclusion, with the American Society of Association Executives to help the Board of Governors continue the advancement of diversity and inclusion in the Academy and the specialty as a whole. Member data, processes, and training were evaluated to determine bias and areas of opportunity for change. The Board was introduced to 4 different paradigms for how one approaches diversity and inclusion—all correct, although held and prioritized differently across individual members. These steps provided an opportunity to pause and self-reflect on the Academy and its operations.

To be truly impactful, AAPM&R is committed to build upon and enhance our inclusive culture. We must understand and respect multiple paradigms, while also prioritizing where we want to focus as an Academy. To do this, there is additional information we must define and collect in order to comprehensively reflect our values and the full scope of our commitment.

The Board of Governors affirmed that diversity and inclusion for the Academy and the specialty must be broadly focused. Our efforts must embrace and advance physiatrists of all backgrounds—no matter the race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, status regarding public assistance, veteran or military

Definition of Terms—Our Perspective

The following terms can be defined and interpreted in many different ways. To ensure transparency and clarity of understanding, below is how we have defined them.

Diversity

Diversity refers to the composition of a group of people from any number of demographic backgrounds, identities (innate and selected), and the collective strength of their experiences, beliefs, values, skills, and perspectives.

Inclusion

Inclusion is the act of establishing philosophies, policies, practices, and procedures to ensure individual voices are heard and there is equal access to opportunities, information, and resources.

Equitable Environment

An equitable environment challenges intentional and unintentional forms of bias, harassment and discrimination and promotes alternative actions. Because an environment can be welcoming and inequitable, attention will be paid to recognizing and eliminating barriers to full participation at individual and systemic levels.

TOGETHER

status, and/or any other legally-protected status. Our efforts must support balanced opportunities and be inclusive of everyone. The culture of the Academy is how we facilitate and uplift all the voices within our specialty. But where do we start?

The vision defines how we must position all physiatrists in order to be successful in the future of medicine.

- Physiatrists are the **essential medical experts**
- Physiatrists are **indispensable leaders**
- Physiatrists are **vital**

In the fall of 2018, the Board of Governors approved a strategic plan that outlines 3 diversity and inclusion goals that correlate to the vision for the specialty. Each goal aims to advance, empower, and strengthen our specialty at the individual and organizational level with the ultimate impact on the culture of our specialty.

Goal: Top Level Commitment and Accountability

The AAPM&R Board of Governor's commitment to diversity and inclusion starts with transparency about what we are working on, and why we are working on it. The Board of Governors will engage its members to work together to demonstrate leadership in diversity and inclusion.

Our initial step in this endeavor is this report to you. Our efforts will continue into 2019 and beyond, including articles in *The Physiatrist* and other communications we will send to you throughout the year.

Goal: Developing Physiatric Leaders

AAPM&R encourages a culture of empowerment that helps members and staff shift from diversity and inclusion problem identifiers to owners and enablers of change.

The AAPM&R Leadership Institute will teach physiatrists to be active and vital leaders in their practice, in their communities, and in the Academy. We will arm physiatrists with the tools needed to be successful in the future of health care and empower them to be owners of change.

Goal: Equitable Environment

AAPM&R will draw upon existing diversity in the specialty to narrow/close demographic and skills gaps in our volunteer leaders and staff applicant pools.

The recently-announced AAPM&R Member Communities are designed to promote the visibility and voices of the least heard and create space for difficult conversations that cultivate both a welcoming and equitable environment for all.

To help fulfill these goals, the Board of Governors approved the creation of the Inclusion and Engagement Strategic Coordinating Committee, along with the newly formed Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Led by Carla P. Watson, MD, FAAPMR, the Diversity and Inclusion committee will be completing the strategic plan—identifying the specific actions and next steps to achieve goals. The committee will oversee its implementation and determine what data needs to be gathered and what processes need to be overhauled to support implementation and accountability.

The Academy is currently accepting applications for this committee. If you are interested, please visit www.aapmr.org/volunteerism.

Together as an Academy, let us embrace this core value and not only portray a diverse and inclusive specialty, but become leaders in medicine working to advance the skills, dreams, and careers of all who wish to practice physiatry.