

Michelle S. Gittler, MD, FAAPMR

Past-President

Tell members a little bit about yourself.

Your Practice

After spending 15 years on the inpatient spinal cord injury service, I am now doing consults at the acute care hospital, and I have outpatient clinic for a focus on spinal cord injury, the care of the amputee, wound care, and a de-institutionalization program seeking to get persons out of nursing homes and back into the community who have not had an appropriate course or trial of acute interdisciplinary rehabilitation.

Your Life Outside of Work

I have a big, very messy family. My two daughters are emotionally healthy individuals that I am proud to call my friends. My husband is also a physician who runs a federally-qualified Health Center consisting of 13 clinics in Chicago. I garden from March or April through November. I recently purchased inflatable kayaks and have been kayaking on the Chicago River. I like reading historical fiction, watching superhero movies, eating more than I should and hiking/walking just about anywhere.

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

Our residency program at Schwab was the recipient of the ACGME Gold Foundation Baldwin Award celebrating humanism in medical education. We are the only freestanding rehabilitation hospital to have ever been awarded this distinction. I am also proud of elevating the discussion around diversity at the Academy and in my home organization and hope to push the issue throughout the medical profession.

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

I believe it is important to pay more than just lip service to social determinants of health. If we really want to improve health outcomes of communities, we need to collect the data that is complicated but, coordinated across institutions. Health systems must understand more about communities, which include: social(political) issues such as food insecurity, housing insecurity, interface with the criminal (in)justice system, and other factors contributing to well-being.

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

I think that I am fun, funny, well-spoken and outspoken.

What do you most look forward to in your service on the Board?

Continuing to be relevant.

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

I enjoy listening to music but sadly, I never learned to play an instrument.