



PM&R Awareness and Value Award

Recognizes individuals whose efforts have significantly elevated the understanding and value of physiatry across healthcare.



Antigone Argyriou, MD, FAAPMR

Antigone Argyriou, MD, FAAPMR

Dr. Argyriou is a double board-certified physiatrist in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Pain Medicine practicing at Spine Medicine and Surgery of Long Island. She completed her Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation residency at Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine, where she served as Chief Resident, followed by fellowship training in Interventional Pain Medicine. She is dedicated to advancing the visibility, influence and value of PM&R through leadership, advocacy, mentorship and physician education.

Dr. Argyriou has distinguished herself as a leader in organized medicine and healthcare advocacy. She is a Past President of the New York Society of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, where she also served as Treasurer and Program Director. A graduate of AAPM&R's Future Leaders Program, she remains actively engaged in advancing the Academy's mission through service on its Reimbursement and Policy Review Committee, where she has contributed to coding resources and educational initiatives that support physiatrists nationwide.

Committed to ensuring that PM&R has a strong voice in healthcare policy, Dr. Argyriou serves as the Alternate CPT Advisor representing AAPM&R to the American Medical Association CPT Editorial Panel, advocating for appropriate physician coding and reimbursement while helping shape the future of procedural medicine. She also serves on the Coding and Reimbursement Committee of the International Pain and Spine Intervention Society, where she contributes to national efforts in reimbursement, advocacy, physician education and mentorship. At the state level, she serves as a voting delegate to the Medical Society of the State of New York House of Delegates through the Suffolk County Medical Society, where she also serves as a Member-at-Large.

Through collaboration with physicians across multiple specialties, she consistently highlights the unique expertise of physiatrists in restoring function through comprehensive, evidence-based, minimally invasive care, ensuring that PM&R has a meaningful voice at the table.

In clinical practice, Dr. Argyriou has championed innovative, function-focused treatments that bridge rehabilitation and interventional medicine, demonstrating the expanding role of physiatrists in caring for patients with complex spine and musculoskeletal disorders. 



Omar F. Selod, DO, FAAPMR

Omar F. Selod, DO, FAAPMR

Dr. Selod attended medical school at Kansas City University and graduated in 1997, completing residency at Baylor University Medical Center (BUMC) in Dallas in 2001.

In 2001, Dr. Selod started private practice as a solo practitioner in Fort Worth, TX (his hometown), practicing general PM&R. When he started his practice, his dream was to provide comprehensive PM&R services as patients in the city were driving over an hour to Dallas to get needed care. He has since added six partners, under the nomenclature of PMR Fort Worth. The practice now provides much needed comprehensive physiatric care to the city.

Dr. Selod has served as a mentor, guiding more than 150 medical students from across the country into the field of PM&R, rotating with him to prep them for their fourth-year PM&R audition rotations. His students call themselves "FOOs" which stands for "Friends of Omar" as a way to connect themselves with each other. Their mentoring includes a year-long journey with him where they talk about interviews, personal statements, CVs, building networks, prepping for audition rotations and the upcoming PM&R match process, and more. Dr. Selod currently holds faculty positions at Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (TCOM), BUMC PM&R Residency, and Baylor All Saints Scott and White Transitional Year Internship.

In 2002, Dr. Selod founded a non-profit called PMR CHARITY, aptly named so that people would ask him "what does PMR stand for? PMR CHARITY has grown over the years, donating more than \$1 million dollars to families and patients, helping to pay for patients dealing with financial hardship due to medical illness, including the costs for medication, durable medical equipment, and in some instances, rent.

Dr. Selod also recently served as the 2024 Tarrant County Medical Society president becoming the first minority to serve in that role. 



Faren Williams, MD, MS, FAAPMR

Faren Williams, MD, MS, FAAPMR

Dr. Williams graduated from Wright State Medical School in Dayton, Ohio and completed her physical medicine and rehabilitation residency at University of Washington in Seattle. She was intrigued by the diversity of the specialty, its holistic approach to patient care and emphasis on functional outcomes. All of these aspects of PM&R resonated with her and allowed her to utilize her creative talents in designing individualized care plans for patients with unique and challenging problems.

Since 2006, she has been a Professor of PM&R at UMass Chan Medical School in Worcester, MA, and served for many years as Chief of PM&R in the Department of Orthopedics and Physical Rehabilitation. In that role, she established a PM&R presence, developed programs and expanded the number of physiatrists from two to nine. She also founded a PM&R special interest group for medical students and has mentored many students who chose PM&R as their specialty. In addition, she is the coordinator of a medical school PM&R clinical elective.

She has presented at AAPM&R's Annual Assembly almost every year, usually on topics related to electrodiagnostic medicine, and has helped students with posters on a variety of topics. She has delivered talks at several international meetings, and is recognized by her students and others for her dedication to learning. She has published in peer-reviewed journals and written book chapters on selected topics.

Her career has been dedicated to a general practice of PM&R, caring for patients with musculoskeletal and neurological problems, utilizing her astute electrodiagnostic skills to help determine the extent of a peripheral nerve problem. She specializes in providing patients and referring providers with prognostic information when they have a peripheral nerve injury and loves helping to formulate a comprehensive treatment plan for each patient.

Dr. Williams served on a national committee whose purpose was to help integrate education concerning disabled patients into medical school curriculums and co-authored a paper regarding the importance of including this education across all specialties. At UMass Chan medical school she has actively helped to support the requirement that every student complete a learning module which focuses on disability. 



2026 PASSOR Legacy Award and Lectureship

Established in 2008 to preserve the legacy and namesake of the *Physiatric Association of Spine, Sports and Occupational Rehabilitation (PASSOR)*, this award is meant to recognize an individual in mid-career who has advanced musculoskeletal physiatry through clinical care, education, service or scholarship (research).



William Mosi Jones, MD, CAQSM, FAAPMR

William Mosi Jones, MD, CAQSM, FAAPMR

Dr. Jones is an Assistant Professor in the Departments of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. Dr. Jones also serves as a physician in the PM&R department at the Nashville Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC).

Dr. Jones completed his residency in physical medicine rehabilitation at Emory University. He later went on to do a sports medicine fellowship at the American Sports Medicine Institute in Birmingham, AL under the tutelage of Drs. James Andrews, Lawrence Lemak and Tracy Ray. Dr. Jones holds subspecialty certifications in sports medicine and electrodiagnostic medicine.

A longstanding volunteer with AAPM&R, Dr. Jones was one of the inaugural members of the Inclusion and Engagement Committee, for which he is still a member. He recently served as Chair for the Access, Impact, and Opportunity committee. He has been an AAPM&R liaison for the AAOS/ASSH Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Quality Measure Development Workgroup and the AAOS Appropriate Use Criteria for Non-Arthroplasty Treatment of Osteoarthritis of the Knee. He also served as the Vice Chair of Education for AAPM&R's Musculoskeletal Medicine Council.

Dr. Jones has provided team physician coverage across collegiate and professional athletics, including his current role as MLS Venue Medical Director and associate team physician for Nashville SC. Dr. Jones was an attending physician in the Sports Medicine Division at Community Health Network (CHN) in Indianapolis. While there, he served as Head Team Physician for the Indy Eleven professional soccer club (USL Soccer). In addition, he was co-head team physician for the University of Indianapolis, overseeing the sports medicine care of more than 700 student-athletes. As part of his commitment as team physician, he helped build a more comprehensive, athlete-centered model of care—expanding services to include robust mental health support and integrated on-site physical therapy, occupational therapy, nutrition services, and neuropsychology for the student athletes. He was a member of CHN's Sports Medicine Executive Committee, where he helped expand the network's sports medicine access across the greater Indianapolis area. This work included establishing CHN as the sports medicine provider for the University of Indianapolis and maintaining current contracts with the special teams under the network's umbrella.

Currently, Dr. Jones is the Director of the Vanderbilt Health PM&R EMG Laboratory, where he has strengthened access, quality and innovation in electrodiagnostic and neuromuscular care. At the Nashville VAMC, Dr. Jones precepts EMG teaching for PM&R residents and spine fellows, and has established a regenerative medicine program to broaden evidence-informed treatment options for veterans, including platelet-rich plasma and extracorporeal shockwave therapy.

His scholarship includes peer-reviewed publication in spine interventions, multiple book chapters spanning sports medicine topics, electrodiagnostic medicine and cancer rehabilitation. He is frequently invited to present on topics such as electrodiagnostic medicine, musculoskeletal ultrasound, regenerative medicine and inclusive communication in healthcare.

Collectively, these contributions reflect a career dedicated to patient-centered function, rigorous clinical teaching and field-wide leadership. 

Respectfully submitted by the 2026 AAPM&R Awards Committee:



Atul Patel, MD, MHSA, FAAPMR, Chair



Zainab J. Al Jawati, MD, FAAPMR



Thiru M. Annaswamy, MD, FAAPMR



Kelly Crozier, MD, FAAPMR



Carla Rawlings Watson, MD, FAAPMR



Deborah Venesky, MD, FAAPMR



Thank You for Nominating

Thank you to all members who participated in this year's awards nominations. 2027 Nominations will open in January; watch [phyzforum.org](https://www.phyzforum.org) for details.



AAPM&R AWARDS SPECIAL ISSUE

AWARD WINNERS

2026 Award Recipients

AAPM&R is proud to announce its 2026 awards, honoring individuals across the career spectrum, from emerging leaders to lifetime achievers. This year's recipients include distinguished physiatrists, clinicians, researchers, dedicated volunteers and public servants whose contributions have advanced the specialty and improved the lives of people with disabilities.

Our Awards Committee received exceptional nominations this year. Member nominations are essential to recognizing leaders who have mentored future generations of physiatrists, advanced innovative research, elevated the visibility of PM&R, and dedicated their careers to service and meaningful impact.

Join us in Orlando as we honor and celebrate our 2026 award recipients on Friday, November 13, from 10:45 am-12 pm (ET). Congratulations to this remarkable group of honorees!



Frank H. Krusen, MD, Lifetime Achievement Award

The Academy's highest honor is the Frank H. Krusen, MD, Lifetime Achievement Award. It was established in 1972 in honor of Frank H. Krusen, MD, a founding father and the fourth president of the Academy who was a leader in the development of the specialty of PM&R. Recipients of the Frank H. Krusen Award are selected for their outstanding and unique contributions to the specialty of PM&R in the areas of patient care, research, education, literary contributions, community service and involvement in Academy activities.



Diana D. Cardenas, MD, MS, MHA, FAAPMR

Diana D. Cardenas, MD, MS, MHA, FAAPMR

Dr. Cardenas is Professor and Chair emerita, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. In 2006, Dr. Cardenas was recruited to the University of Miami (UM) as the first permanent chair of the Department of PM&R and as Chief of Rehabilitation Medicine at Jackson Memorial Hospital. She served in this position until 2015. In 1976, Dr. Cardenas completed residency in PM&R at the University of Washington, Seattle. In residency, she conducted a pre-clinical study of disuse atrophy for an MS that earned her a national award from the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine. In 1981, she joined the UW faculty primarily as an in-patient physiatrist. Her clinical research focused on two problems common to her patients: pain and UTIs. As part of a team of researchers, she guided the first randomized placebo-controlled trial of amitriptyline for chronic pain in persons with SCI via an NIH-funded program project. Her interest in treatment and classification of pain led to a lifetime of collaborations in the area of pain. She also became the PI/Project Director of the Northwest Regional SCI System from 1990-2006. She conducted urodynamic studies on the neurogenic bladder and the prevention of UTIs and participated in a large RCT funded by industry on the efficacy of hydrophilic catheters to prevent UTIs in SCI (Cardenas, et al, 2011). She has published approximately 137 refereed manuscripts, 38 chapters and co-edited 10 books. She has lectured locally, nationally and internationally.

Dr. Cardenas joined AAPM&R in 1978 and gave lectures, presented posters and oral research presentations. She joined 13 committees and Special Interest Groups such as the Spinal Cord and Neurorehabilitation SIG in 1988, becoming its Chair in 1998. She volunteered on the Subcommittee on Women Physiatrists and was Vice Chair in 1996.

She joined the Research Committee in 1994, became Chair of the Research Advisory and Advocacy Committee (1997-2001) always advocating for more rehabilitation research funding. In 2003, she was Chair of the Women Physiatrists SIG. She was also a member of the CNS Rehabilitation Council (Vice Chair, Membership, 2009-2012).

From 2002-2005, Dr. Cardenas was on the newly-established Board of Directors of the Foundation for PM&R (FPMR). She was Chair of its Awards and Grants Review Committee from 2009-2015. In 2016, she rejoined the Board of Directors and became President (2021-2023), helping lead the FPMR toward greater success in providing research seed grant awards.

Board service includes the NIH Clinical Center's Board of Scientific Counselors and the NIH NICHD NCMRR National Advisory Board on Medical Rehabilitation Research (chair 2007-08). She was a member of the Board of Directors of the American Spinal Injury Association (ASIA), served on the ACGME RRC for PM&R in 1995-1996 and 2006-2012, and was also an active member of several other professional organizations (i.e., ACRM, AAP and APS).

In 2011 in Miami, while chair of the department, she became the PI/Project Director of the South Florida SCI Model System and led a team on research in SCI pain. She participated in a large, international multi-center trial of pregabalin that resulted in FDA-approval of pregabalin for SCI pain (Cardenas DD, Nieshoff EC, Suda K, et al. 2013).

Honors include Who's Who of American Women, 1993; Election to the IOM (NAM), 2004; Ernest Bors Award for Scientific Development, American Paraplegia Society, 2009; AAP Distinguished Academician Award, 2013; Estin Comarr Award for Distinguished Clinical Service, APS, ASCIP, 2016; and the 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Spinal Injury Association.

In 2004, she was elected to the Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine). Since 1996, she has served on five of its committees most recently in 2019, and one board – all related to disability, rehabilitation or pain. 



Distinguished Member Award

The Distinguished Member Award was established in 1994 to honor AAPM&R members who have provided invaluable service to the specialty of PM&R, and demonstrated excellence in physiatric clinical care, scholarly activities and contributions to the Academy.



Danielle Melton
MD, FAAPMR

Danielle Melton, MD, FAAPMR

Dr. Melton is a Professor in the PM&R and Orthopedic departments at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, where she serves as the Director of Amputation Medicine and Rehabilitation Program for the Osseointegration/Bone Anchored Limb and Limb Restoration Program.

A unique education of a Mechanical Engineering degree from Louisiana State University paired with a Doctor of Medicine degree from Baylor College of Medicine, has positioned Dr. Melton at the intersection of human physiology and biomechanical innovation. Following her residency in PM&R at Baylor, Dr. Melton served as faculty at the University of Texas, Houston (McGovern Medical School) and as the Director of the Amputee Program at The Institute of Rehabilitation and Research (TIRR-Memorial Hermann), specializing in the rehabilitation of orthopedic trauma with an emphasis on non-surgical management of limb salvage and amputations.

Beyond her clinical practice, Dr. Melton is a dedicated advocate for individuals experiencing limb loss, serving in numerous leadership roles in the Amputee Coalition, including a member of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Scientific Medical Advisory Committee (SciMAC). She also serves as the Science Chair of the advisory panel for the national Limb Loss Preservation Registry (LLPR), contributing to the vital data infrastructure utilized by clinicians nationwide to track outcomes and the continuous quality improvement across the profession.

Dr. Melton remains anchored in compassionate clinical care with effective partnerships and interdisciplinary teamwork, steadfastly advocating to raise the benchmark for what is possible in limb restoration. [📄](#)



Channarayapatna R. Sridhara
MD, FAAPMR

Channarayapatna R. Sridhara, MD, FAAPMR

Dr. Sridhara is Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine at Sidney Kimmel Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia and serves as Director of the Jefferson Moss-Magee Rehabilitation Electrodiagnostic Center. He served as the inaugural Program Director of the Einstein Moss Rehab Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) Residency Program.

Dr. Sridhara earned his medical degree from Government Medical College, Mysore, India. He completed his residency in PM&R through the combined Temple University/Albert Einstein Medical Center/Moss Rehabilitation Hospital training program.

Dr. Sridhara has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications, committee reports and textbook chapters in the field of Electrodiagnostic Medicine. He has delivered lectures and led educational workshops at national conferences, with a strong commitment to advancing Electrodiagnostic Medicine within PM&R through the integration of clinical neurophysiology and functional anatomy. His clinical and academic interests focus on disorders of the peripheral nervous system and their impact on rehabilitation outcomes including patients with central nervous system injuries and diseases.

Dr. Sridhara has been recognized as a Top Doctor by *Philadelphia Magazine* for multiple years. He has also received the Dean's Award for Excellence in Education from Sidney Kimmel Medical College and the Ernest Johnson Outstanding Educator Award from the American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodiagnostic Medicine.

For more than four decades, Dr. Sridhara has dedicated himself to educating PM&R residents from Temple University, Thomas Jefferson University, and the Einstein/MossRehab residency programs in the wider Philadelphia region. He takes pride in having trained generations of physiatrists and electromyographers, many of whom have gone on to become leaders in the specialty. [📄](#)



Gregory M. Worsowicz
MD, MBA, FAAPMR

Gregory M. Worsowicz, MD, MBA, FAAPMR

Dr. Worsowicz is a Consultant in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida. Prior to joining the Mayo Clinic, he served as Professor and Chair of the Department of PM&R at the University of Missouri School of Medicine. During his eight-year tenure, he was Medical Director of Post-Acute Care for the University of Missouri Health Care System, Medical Director of Rusk Rehabilitation Hospital, and Chair of the University Physicians Practice Group, representing more than 600 physicians.

Dr. Worsowicz served on AAPM&R's Board of Governors for eight years and also as President. In that role, he testified before the Congressional Ways and Means Committee on issues related to quality and post-acute care, and before a Ways and Means subcommittee regarding the 75% Inpatient Rehabilitation Rule. His clinical and research interests include cost-effective systems of care, program development, healthcare policy and geriatric rehabilitation.

As Chair of AAPM&R's 2017 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Summit, he convened leaders from the Academy, certifying and accrediting bodies, residency programs, and academic institutions to address critical challenges

facing graduate medical education and the future physician workforce. By fostering meaningful dialogue and building consensus among stakeholders, he helped shape discussions that informed the specialty's educational priorities and long-term strategic direction.

Dr. Worsowicz's contributions have been recognized through numerous honors for excellence in patient care, medical education and leadership, including the Teacher of the Year Award from the University of Missouri's Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and recognition as Columbia's Favorite Doctor in Columbia, Missouri. He was also nominated by his PM&R colleagues to serve as a Joy Ambassador at the Mayo Clinic in Florida, a distinction that reflects his exceptional ability to foster connection, positivity and engagement within the healthcare workplace. He is known for cultivating meaningful relationships with patients, colleagues and staff, exemplifying the values of service, leadership and humanity that have defined his career. [📄](#)



Distinguished Public Service, Health Equity and Advocacy Award

This award was established to honor individuals who, in the course of public service activities, have made significant contributions to enhance the quality-of-life for individuals with disabilities, or in vulnerable populations at risk for disabilities.



Nethra S. Ankam
MD, FAAPMR

Nethra S. Ankam, MD, FAAPMR

Dr. Ankam is a Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine at Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University. Throughout her career, she has dedicated herself to advancing disability-inclusive healthcare, medical education and interprofessional collaboration. Her work has focused on ensuring that future healthcare professionals understand the role of function, disability and rehabilitation in patient care.

As Director of Undergraduate Medical Education for Rehabilitation Medicine since 2010, Dr. Ankam has led the development of a longitudinal rehabilitation curriculum that integrates PM&R principles throughout all four years of medical school. Her efforts have expanded the visibility of physiatry within undergraduate medical education while helping prepare physicians across specialties to care more effectively for people with disabilities.

A hallmark of Dr. Ankam's career has been her leadership of the Jefferson Health Mentors Program, where she has served as Co-Faculty Lead since 2015. One of the nation's largest and longest-running interprofessional education programs, Health Mentors pairs students from multiple health professions with community members living with chronic illness, impairment or disability. Through these partnerships, students gain insight into lived experiences, social determinants of health, teamwork and person-centered care. Under her leadership, the program has expanded to incorporate advocacy, health equity and community engagement while generating national recognition, scholarship and awards in interprofessional education.

She is also a national leader in disability education and has contributed to initiatives that advance disability competency across the medical education continuum, including service on the planning committee for the ACGME Summit on Fostering Disability-Inclusive Health Care in Resident Education. Her scholarship includes more than 40 peer-reviewed publications, educational resources and book chapters focused on disability education, interprofessional practice and medical education innovation. She served as Principal Investigator of a Craig H. Neilsen Foundation-funded project designed to improve reproductive healthcare for women with spinal cord injury through education of OB/GYN physicians and interprofessional healthcare teams. [📄](#)



Ravi E. Kasi
MD, FAAPMR

Ravi E. Kasi, MD, FAAPMR

Dr. Kasi was born and raised in Wheaton, IL. After graduating from high school, Dr. Kasi attended the University of Illinois at Chicago receiving a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology in 2003. He then continued his studies at the University of Illinois College of Medicine earning a Doctorate in Medicine in 2009. Following his graduation from medical school, Dr. Kasi completed a residency (including a chief residency year) in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) at Rush University Medical Center.

Since finishing residency, Dr. Kasi has served in a variety of roles including Patient Safety Officer, Medical Director of inpatient rehabilitation services, and Course Director of rehabilitation grand rounds. His main passion is in Medical Education, having served as Residency Director in PM&R at Rush University Medical Center since 2018. He also enjoys lecturing on a variety of topics for medical students, physician assistant students, and resident physicians at programs in the Chicagoland area. He also created the "Chicago PM&R Medical Student Fellowship Program" that assists in curating medical students interested in PM&R.

He also passionate about disability advocacy and served as the President of the Young Professional Leadership Council for Access Living, a disability rights organization, in Chicago, IL. As part of this work, he has given numerous talks on disability advocacy. He also served as the Chair of the Medical Student Education Council at AAP and South Asian Physiatrists of North America (SAPNA). [📄](#)



Terrence M. Pugh
MD, FAAPMR

Terrence M. Pugh, MD, FAAPMR

Dr. Pugh received his Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from the University of Alabama in 2006. He later attended the University of Alabama School of Medicine and graduated in June 2010. He completed his internal medicine internship at the University of Alabama School of Medicine-Montgomery program and residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Carolinas Medical Center where he served as Chief Resident in his final year of training.

Dr. Pugh is currently an Associate Professor at Wake Forest University School of Medicine, the Medical Director of Carolinas Rehabilitation–Charlotte, the Director of Oncology Rehabilitation for Carolinas Rehabilitation and is Vice Chief of the Rehabilitation Section at Levine Cancer Institute in Charlotte, NC. Dr. Pugh provides inpatient and outpatient services to patients with all cancer diagnoses including hematologic and solid tumors. His interests include improving comprehensive cancer care delivery throughout the region and watching University of Alabama athletics.

In addition to his clinical responsibilities, Dr. Pugh also serves as the Chair of Access and Opportunity for the Adult Medical Specialties Division of Atrium Health with the task of educating and providing tools for faculty physicians, fellows, residents and medical students across the division to help provide equitable and comprehensive care for all. In this role, he has also helped develop the Physician and APP Access and Opportunity Course through the Center for Physician and APP Leadership and Development, which allows providers across the Advocate Health Enterprise to receive additional training in topics such as active allyship, how social drivers of health impact patient outcomes and inclusive leadership. In February 2026, Dr. Pugh developed and led the first Foundations in Disability education course for the rising third-year medical students at Wake Forest University School of Medicine–Charlotte. This course is given to all medical students during their Transition to Patient Care Course and provides an introduction into caring for people living with disabilities regardless of specialty or clinical setting. Dr. Pugh believes that through education and advocacy, healthcare can be improved for everyone. [📄](#)



Early PM&R Career Award

Recognizes Academy members who have made an impact on the future of PM&R through distinction in innovation, advocacy, leadership, service or clinical practice within ten or fewer years in practice.



Abby L. Cheng
MD, MPH, FAAPMR

Abby L. Cheng, MD, MPH, FAAPMR

Dr. Cheng is a tenured Associate Professor in the Division of Musculoskeletal Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation within the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at WashU Medicine, with joint appointments in the Division of Public Health Sciences within the Department of Surgery and the Division of Infectious Diseases within the Department of Medicine. She is also the Research Director of the WashU Living Well Center. Her research program aims to optimize the conservative management of chronic musculoskeletal pain and related impairment by addressing biopsychosocial comorbidities as part of a person-centered comprehensive treatment plan. Her work has been supported by numerous federal research institutes including NIAMS, NIMH and AHRQ. She also serves as a clinical expert collaborator to investigate biomarkers for myofascial pain and to evaluate the impact of dosage and timing on steroid injection safety for large joint injections.

In recent years, Dr. Cheng has contributed to PM&R's leadership role in addressing the individual and societal burden of Long COVID. In addition to serving as the Medical Director of the WashU Long COVID clinic, she is a Co-chair of AAPM&R's Long COVID Collaborative and co-led development of AAPM&R's Long COVID mental health and compendium guidance statements. She was also a member of the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS) Long COVID Expert Panel, and she is the lead principal investigator of WashU's AHRQ "first-of-its-kind" cooperative U18 grant to improve access to Long COVID care.

Dr. Cheng is also passionate about applying research expertise to advance the field of PM&R. She serves as the Resident Research Director for WashU Physiatry, is an Associate Editor of *PM&R*, and is a member of AAPM&R's Quality and Research Steering Committee. [📄](#)



Jessica Tse Cheng
MD, FAAPMR

Jessica Tse Cheng, MD, FAAPMR

Dr. Cheng is an Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Supportive Care Medicine at City of Hope Orange County where she serves as Medical Director of PM&R. She is the first PM&R physician in the City of Hope National Medical Center, a nationwide NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. She is passionate about whole person care, multidisciplinary collaboration and practice building. She supports patients from prehabilitation to rehabilitation to palliation in a growing outpatient practice. She received her Doctor of Medicine degree from Boston University School of Medicine before completing residency at Loma Linda University Health. This was followed by fellowship in cancer rehabilitation medicine at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

In addition to clinical efforts, Dr. Cheng has led educational and research efforts through AAPM&R's Cancer Rehabilitation Physician Consortium. She spearheaded the Cancer Rehabilitation Tumor Board, a bimonthly virtual discussion of complex cases, bringing collaborative expertise across the nation together for an engaging educational opportunity. Her research interests include prehabilitation, demonstrating the value of PM&R in

oncology and implementation science. She has published a systematic review in *JAMA* regarding rehabilitation interventions for head and neck cancer-associated lymphedema and has contributed to multiple book chapters. She routinely engages trainees, presents at national/international conferences, has a growing media presence, and collaborates with philanthropy. Her mission is to transform cancer care by integrating PM&R early in the cancer journey—providing a greater opportunity not just to survive, but to thrive. [📄](#)



Stephanie Tow
MD, FAAPMR

Stephanie Tow, MD, FAAPMR

Dr. Tow is an Associate Professor in the University of Colorado (CU) PM&R Department and holds appointments in Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine and the Orthopedics Institute–Sports Medicine Center at Children's Hospital Colorado (CHCO). She is quadruple board-certified in PM&R, Sports Medicine, Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine and Brain Injury Medicine.

Dr. Tow completed fellowships in pediatric rehabilitation medicine and sports medicine to develop expertise in caring for athletes with disabilities. She serves as Head Team Physician and Medical Director for U.S. Paralympics Swimming, where she has led the development of the organization's medical infrastructure since 2020. She provides year-round medical support for Team USA Para Swimmers, coordinates multidisciplinary care nationwide, recruits and leads traveling medical teams, develops organizational medical policies, and advocates for athlete health/wellness. She has provided medical coverage at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, the 2023 and 2025 World Para Swimming World Championships, and many other competitions.

She is Medical Director of the CHCO Adaptive Recreation for Childhood Health program, and previously co-founded and directed the UT Southwestern Dallas–Fort Worth Adaptive Sports Coalition.

Dr. Tow has taught extensively through AAPM&R, U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) and other organizations, advocating for greater inclusion of Para sports topics in clinician education. She was a speaker at the inaugural 2025 USOPC Paralympic Sports Medicine International Conference and co-chaired the 2024 and 2026 *British Journal of Sports Medicine* Live programs on Para sports medicine.

She has served numerous leadership roles within AAPM&R since 2014, including positions on the RPC/PHIT Board, Medical Education Committee, Membership Committee and Board of Governors. As President of the RPC Board, she successfully advocated for the RPC Board to include PM&R fellowship trainees, changing the RPC to the PHIT Board. She has presented at many AAPM&R educational events, including the Resident Retreat, STEP Concussion program, and every Annual Assembly since 2016. She is graduating from AAPM&R's Future Leaders Program this year.

At CU School of Medicine, Dr. Tow serves as Anatomy Curriculum Co-Director, COMPASS Guide, PM&R Residency Mentorship Director, and Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine student rotations Site Director. Through these roles, she teaches and mentors learners across all stages of training. [📄](#)