



Election Season is Here!

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It is time, once again for elections to take place at the American Academy of Physician Associates.

Not enough of us avail ourselves of the vote when the time comes around. I encourage you to head over to the AAPA website and read about the candidates that are available and what issues are affecting PAs, as well as how the candidates plan to direct resources and their insight into the future of our profession.

Voting is now open in the AAPA's 2023 Board of Directors General Election and Student Academy Board of Directors Election. I cannot overstate the importance of knowing who is directing our profession. It is important to know current issues affecting our daily practice.

The AAPA National Conference has recently convened, and the Board of Director candidates were there, actively campaigning, and answering questions about themselves and the issues that face our profession. You must be an AAPA member to have a vote in the election, so I also urge you to become a member on the national level, and of course, on the state level as well, so you can be appraised of local and national issues that are affecting our profession.

One of the issues that got a lot of lip service at the conference was diversity, equity and inclusion. Every candidate mentioned it at one time or another and there was a lot of talk about improving access to a diverse team of medical professionals and representation in the higher levels of PA governance. That being said, there was not a lot of diversity in the candidates. There are a lot of reasons for this that have nothing to do with the quality of the candidates or their ability to circumnavigate the political environs of the PA local or national levels. There are a lot of reasons for the lack of diversity in the upper management and leadership levels of most of our state and local governing bodies, many of which are being currently worked on by these same governing

bodies. But does it stand to reason that, because it is being looked at and worked on, that it will get better moving forward? I would argue, no.

I can state, with immense confidence, that meeting, and discussing diversity, and inclusion will not be enough to change anybody's practice, because it has not worked so far. We have been discussing these issues for more than 40 years and we keep bumping into the same problems; why is there so little diversity in our profession, or in the leadership roles within our state and national academies? These questions are also being asked by corporations, legislative boards and medical communities throughout our country. I can also state with confidence that this problem has worsened over the last 15 years. My children have fewer protected rights than I did when I was their age. In fact, xenophobia has escalated so much in this country over the last 15 years, that my children and myself are facing similar threats to ourselves and our rights, such as have not been faced in this country since the 60's, during the Civil Rights movement. Many of the gains made by the Civil Rights movement have been methodically marched back by the current Republican Party.

The biggest difference between then and now, is that we see these changes for what they are, efforts to undo civil rights gains for women and minorities of all kinds, including sexual minorities. Talking, discussing, ruminating and hypothesizing will never change things, we must be willing to step out of what we have already done to make a real difference. I would recommend listening to minority voices for assessment of the problem and for solutions to the obstacles facing minorities wishing to ascend to leadership positions.

So reader, now is the time to speak up and be heard. Avail yourself of the leadership opportunities around you. We need you to get engaged and become an indispensable part of your profession.

Physician Assistant News

What are some of the issues that cause you to think twice about committing your time to development of your own leadership qualities? What do you hope to accomplish in your career before you retire? Thinking about these issues can guide you to a greater involvement in your profession, which in turn, would develop your leadership potential. I would also ask, what are some of the things that really bother you about your profession? What would you do to change these things? You may be the answer that we all are looking for.

I would add that diversity does not only pertain to race. There should be financial diversity in leadership, not all high school to college to advanced degree members. People who have dealt with financial hardship are some of the best suited to finding solutions that are beyond the scope of conventional thinking. Sexual minorities, women, immigrants, and people of color along all diaspora are encouraged to learn about their professional environment and make a commitment to your profession that will be long lasting and provide hope for a better future for everyone in the profession, not just a predetermined few.

I encourage you to reach for greatness, and in so doing, you can bring us along with you! With that in mind, I would like to extend my congratulations to Ed Lopez PA-C, recently elected as the WMC's Officer at Large, the first PA to attain this position. Congratulations, Ed!

Work with DOH to Prevent Healthcare- associated Infections

Healthcare-associated infections and antimicrobial resistance (HAIAR) are serious problems, and many are preventable. The HAIAR team at DOH oversees six programs that work to prevent HAIARs in healthcare and community settings across the state. The team does this work by building partnerships across the healthcare system and providing opportunities for education, information, and connection. Healthcare providers, public health professionals, and partners across the healthcare system should work with the DOH HAIAR team to prevent and respond to HAIs and ARs in Washington.

[Watch this video](#) to learn more about what the DOH HAIAR team does and how they can support you in preventing the spread of infections. Questions?

Reach out to the HAIAR team at
HAI@doh.wa.gov.

Stay Up to Date on Viral Hepatitis Guidelines

The Washington State Department of Health encourages providers to promote viral hepatitis testing, vaccination, and treatment. To support you, we are sharing resources and current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) viral hepatitis guidelines and recommendations, including new guidelines for hepatitis B screening.

- New 2023 [guidelines for hepatitis B screening and testing](#) (CDC).
- [Testing recommendations for hepatitis C](#) (CDC).
- [Vaccination guidelines for hepatitis A](#) (CDC).
- [Vaccination guidelines for hepatitis B](#) (CDC).
- Treat hepatitis B and hepatitis C in primary care settings. Learn more at the University of Washington's [Hepatitis B Online](#) and [Hepatitis C Online](#).
- [Hep B Hub](#): hepatitis B patient resources in multiple languages.

Visit our [provider information webpage](#) for more details.

If you have questions or need support, [please contact us](#).