

Overcoming Barriers Together: The Evolution of Medical Education to Support our Members

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Warmer weather, greening lawns and emerging landscapes filled with color. Spring has arrived. This is the time of year I re-engage in outdoor activities, most notably gardening. Starting plants by seed, tending to their needs and ultimately enjoying their beauty and bounty is a wholly satisfying experience, which lasts well beyond the growing and harvesting seasons. Of course, Mother Nature ensures it is not always smooth sailing. The onslaught of hungry squirrels, occasional disease bearing insects and inclement weather requires a thoughtful approach to ensure a successful outcome each season with the help of family and friends. In a similar vein, our PM&R BOLD effort requires insightful and proactive actions with the input of many to ensure we realize the envisioned future for our field.

This issue of *The Physiatrist* focuses on engagement and volunteerism. The Academy is committed to advancing our BOLD vision for the specialty; ensuring physiatry thrives well into the future as a vital, indispensable and necessary component of healthcare. Academy leadership and I are immensely grateful to the thousands of members who engage and volunteer their time, expertise and insights to help us realize our shared envisioned future for physiatry. Together, we are a collective force, addressing significant barriers we will surpass with your efforts and commitment to physiatry, ensuring a bright future.

Similar to my gardening challenges, our field faces several barriers we need to address in order to reach our BOLD goals. One challenge is ensuring medical education for both our trainees and practicing members continually adapts to match the changing healthcare landscape. Physiatrists add value early and throughout the continuum of care, requiring an abundance of skills that often need adaptation in a rapidly changing healthcare environment.

Your Academy is committed to preparing PM&R physician members with the education they need to thrive in new realms of healthcare, including:

- Establishing recognition for key areas of PM&R expertise through our existing STEP Certificates in spasticity and musculoskeletal ultrasound, with concussion coming in the near future.
- Providing innovative education in new areas pertinent to physiatry.
- Supporting program directors and physiatrists in residency and fellowship by leading the transformation of graduate medical education and developing updated musculoskeletal and cancer rehabilitation curriculums. The Medical Education Committee's continual assessment of these curriculums to identify and address gaps and emerging needs. Assess current and future healthcare trends and ultimately make recommendations to the ACGME PM&R Review Committee to better align physiatric training in partnership with the Association of Academic Physiatrists and American Board of PM&R.
- Continually innovating the Annual Assembly (AA) experience. The Program Planning Committee works to identify the most needed sessions to ensure our attendees have access to all of the most relevant content in clinical and research areas important to our diverse membership. Additionally, Annual Assembly attendees now have free access to the AA Rewind, providing continued access to all recorded sessions.
- Publishing guidance and delivering education on Long COVID.



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Ensuring our members have ready access to the most up-to-date and relevant medical education is one of several key areas the Academy is addressing in order help us all drive PM&R BOLD. Equally important is the support education provides in helping to navigate healthcare challenges you are experiencing in your own practice.

Other challenges the Academy and our members identified and that I am looking forward to discussing in future editorials include data and quality to both support and drive our contributions to healthcare, advocacy and innovative practice models, leadership training, workforce shortages, and awareness and brand value of physiatry. Identifying and overcoming barriers to our shared envisioned future are at the core of the Academy's mission and are the essence of PM&R BOLD. Your engagement is critical to our field and healthcare in general. Similar to my garden, the benefits of our collective actions now will last well into the future. A special thank you to the many volunteers who have and continue to contribute to visioning and leading the evolution of education for our membership and our field.

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