

Power in Numbers

Steven R. Flanagan, MD, FAAPMR
 AAPM&R President, Chair of Rehabilitation Medicine at New York University Grossman School of Medicine and Medical Director of Rusk Rehabilitation at NYU-Langone Health

One of my favorite Annual Assembly memories is the special President’s Reception held at Universal Studios’ Harry Potter World. Despite my age, I am admittedly a big fan of the books, movies and Broadway play (and I regularly beat my niece and nephew in Hogwarts trivia). As most of you undoubtedly know, the book series speaks of good triumphing over evil and the many challenges faced in achieving an important goal. In one book, Harry senses he is alone in his struggles, only to discover he has countless allies eager to assist in achieving a just outcome. Phrased slightly differently, Harry’s friends, schoolmates and teachers shared his vision and were strong advocates who helped secure a bright future.

While the Academy does not have a wand or magical spell to secure the future of physiatry, we consider advocacy for PM&R as one of our strongest tools, which serves as a foundation and major reason for our existence.

Healthcare is in a steady state of transformation, presenting a never-ending flood of challenges for physiatrists, regardless of where or how we practice. Your Academy continually advocates for your professional future in multiple ways to ensure PM&R thrives in a world where physiatrists are viewed by key stakeholders as:

- The **essential** medical experts in value-based evaluation, diagnosis and management of neuromuscular and disabling conditions,
- **Indispensable** in directing rehabilitation and recovery, and in preventing injury and disease, and
- **Vital** in optimizing outcomes and function early and throughout the continuum of patient care.

To maximize our effectiveness, Academy advocacy is extensive, strategic and highly-coordinated. It spans multiple venues and includes ongoing formal advocacy in Congress including but not limited to our yearly “Day on the Hill.” We engage numerous regulatory bodies in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that impact both current and future reimbursement. We communicate with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the CMS Innovation Center, National Institutes of Health (NIH), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) on behalf of physiatrists and PM&R. The Academy represents PM&R in the American Medical Association, which includes securing an active role in the RVS Update Committee (RUC) to influence Medicare relative value impacting physiatrists. We also work with other partner organizations to enhance our effectiveness (see page 6).

Similar to Harry Potter, our success at the end of the day requires the support and advocacy of many and through multiple venues. The recent Academy’s Department Chairs Summit summoned local leaders to advocate for physiatry within their local healthcare systems. Your support through membership permits us to achieve our shared priorities for the field, recognizing the stronger we are as an Academy, the more we can do to secure your future and those who will follow us. Recent efforts of the Academy and our volunteers are listed on pages 8-12, and include fighting to reduce the burden of prior authorization, counter proposed fee cuts and improve reimbursement, and defending against scope of practice encroachment from non-physiatrist and non-physicians.

While many of our advocacy efforts may not be always readily visible, they are ever present and successful, which can only continue with your support. Membership is a vital key to our success going forward. There is considerable power in numbers!



Steven R. Flanagan
 MD, FAAPMR

#aapmr23

**NEW ORLEANS, LA & VIRTUAL
 NOVEMBER 15-19, 2023**

Don’t miss all the education, camaraderie and fun at this year’s Annual Assembly— November 15-19 in New Orleans and online. We’re back in the “Big Easy” and have some great things planned for you. Read more on pages 4-5.

**BOLDLY
 SECURING
 YOUR
 FUTURE**



**Check out our
 YouTube channel**

to listen to Dr. Flanagan discuss the barriers our field needs to address in order to reach our BOLD goals. Topics he will address include medical education, leadership training, awareness of the specialty, advocacy, data and quality, and workforce shortages.