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Supporting and Guiding PM&R Through Healthcare Transformations

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As July arrives and the full heat of summer is upon us, we find ourselves close to the midpoint of the year, a time that often prompts reflection. The days are long, filled with the relentless energy of the sun, and yet the year seems to be moving at a rapid pace. It seems like yesterday that I was writing for the December 2023/January 2024 issue of *The Physiatrist*. In that issue, I highlighted five of the strategic goals for AAPM&R to help guide the advancement of our specialty. Among these was the commitment to “Support and guide PM&R physicians in their practices for optimal success in healthcare transformations.”

We recognize that in rapidly-changing times, healthcare continues to transform. To keep pace with these transformations, the Academy has been actively working on multiple endeavors so that we are all well-equipped to navigate any changes that may come. Over the last several years, one such endeavor is PM&R BOLD, which was designed to articulate a compelling vision for our specialty. This vision not only aims to position PM&R earlier and throughout the care continuum but it also seeks to establish PM&R in new settings for the future.

PM&R BOLD focuses on several core and growing practice areas within our diverse specialty, including cancer rehabilitation medicine, musculoskeletal medicine, pain management and spine rehabilitation, pediatric rehabilitation medicine and the rehabilitation care continuum. At the 2024 Annual Assembly in San Diego we will have several exciting sessions that pertain to PM&R BOLD. These sessions align with the vision for the specialty and will help attendees understand the changing healthcare environment. They will spotlight opportunities for PM&R to be positioned early and throughout the care continuum while also discussing new innovative practice and payment models. Furthermore, they aim to address how members are overcoming barriers the specialty is facing to achieve the vision and work in innovative new models.

These sessions combine nicely with the numerous published papers and toolkits from AAPM&R that are focused on the PM&R BOLD agenda and assisting each of us as our practices evolve.

- In the summer of 2021, we released the musculoskeletal medicine (MSK) paper, **“A Closer Look at the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation’s Strategic Initiative to Envision – and Effectuate – the Future of Musculoskeletal Care,”** which explored MSK practice models and the opportunities for physiatrists in this practice area.
- In the fall of 2022, we released the rehabilitation care continuum (RCC) paper, **“The American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation’s Strategic Initiative to Envision – and Effectuate – The Future of Care Across the Rehabilitation Care Continuum.”** This paper took a closer look at the RCC envisioned future to illustrate how and why it was developed, the opportunities it presents for PM&R physicians

and the strategic work needed to support the specialty's progress toward the vision.

- In 2023, we released a white paper on **"Telehealth in PM&R: Past, Present and Future in Clinical Practice and Opportunities for Translational Research."** This came to fruition after AAPM&R convened an expert group of leaders to examine telehealth innovation across various practice settings and areas of care unique to the PM&R specialty. This white paper summarizes the cutting-edge use of telehealth in our specialty, explores new and transformative opportunities for PM&R to advance translational research, patient care and more. You can find the paper at aapmr.org/telehealth.

» *Coming soon!* We will be hosting a Telehealth Technology Summit this December, bringing together technology vendors and PM&R experts to discuss opportunities for emerging technologies in PM&R practice.

- Earlier in 2024, we also released the **Stroke Rehabilitation and Spine Care Toolkits**, which serve as guides for Academy members who are seeking to implement PM&R-led stroke rehabilitation and spine care alternative payment models in their practice or payment system. The goal of these toolkits is to support opportunities for members to approach healthcare systems and payers to encourage stroke rehabilitation and spine care alternative payment model adoption and innovate the systems of care to provide enhanced and progressive rehabilitation throughout the continuum. You can find these toolkits at aapmr.org/apms.
- In May 2024, we published guidance to assist PM&R providers in the management of spasticity. AAPM&R has long been involved in this area as PM&R has firmly established its value in treating individuals with spasticity. Learn more and read the guidance at aapmr.org/spasticity.

- Coming later in 2024, is the pain management and spine rehabilitation (PSR) paper that will dive deep into the PSR envisioned future and practice models.

These initiatives are just a part of the comprehensive efforts the Academy is undertaking on our behalf to prepare us for any necessary changes. We understand that not everyone may need to modify their practices right now, but change often happens very rapidly.

AAPM&R is committed to staying ahead of the curve and being ready to support our members in their time of need. Our objective is to best position each of us to succeed in this dynamic healthcare landscape. After all, we firmly believe that we are part of the very best medical specialty, and we will continue to advocate and innovate to ensure that PM&R remains at the forefront of healthcare transformations.



Academy in Action

AAPM&R is Defending the Role of Psychiatrists Against Encroachment from Non-PM&R Physicians and Non-Physicians

- In collaboration with the American Medical Association's Scope of Practice Partnership (AMA SOPP) and the New Hampshire Medical Society (NHMS), your Academy engaged with members in New Hampshire to oppose HB 1222. If passed, this legislation would allow physician assistants to practice medicine without any physician involvement by removing the current collaboration requirements. Your AAPM&R State Advocacy Committee will continue to monitor the legislation and explore other opportunities to advocate against scope creep at the state level.
- Your Academy notified members in Missouri to a scope of practice expansion effort by the orthotists or prosthetists in their state. Missouri HB 2115 would allow orthotists or prosthetists to evaluate and initiate treatment for patients without referral from a physician. Your Academy shared our significant concerns about this proposal with the Missouri State Medical Association (MSMA) and the AMA. The bill failed to pass during the 2024 legislative session. With the potential to be reintroduced next year, the Academy will continue to monitor this issue in Missouri and other states.
- Your Academy notified members in Washington about a scope of practice expansion effort in their state. Washington SB 5411 would allow naturopathic physicians to prescribe prescription drugs and controlled substances. Your Academy continues to track the progress of SB 5411 and monitor future advocacy opportunities.