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The Importance of Investing in Yourself and the Specialty

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As we are all keenly aware, the healthcare landscape is ever-evolving and PM&R is at a pivotal juncture. Challenges are numerous and include physician shortages, changes in reimbursement models and increasing complexity of healthcare delivery systems. Fortunately, PM&R has always been at the forefront of multidisciplinary, team-based and patient-centered care. We are also experts in navigating the complexities of our healthcare systems and have a long history of prioritizing value-based care and patient-centered outcomes. Our expertise aligns perfectly with the goals of modern healthcare systems, and positions us well to advocate for our patients, our specialty and policies that improve patient care and outcomes. However, to be the most effective

in navigating these evolutions in healthcare, we all need to strive to be the strongest most proactive leaders possible. After all, leadership in healthcare isn't just about managing a team or running a department—it's about advocating for our patients, driving innovation and influencing policy.

The Academy understands the value of leadership and the critical need to cultivate this essential skill among our members, and we have made it a priority to provide our members with the tools they need to thrive. With insights from the PM&R BOLD initiative and feedback from our membership, we have launched several initiatives

designed specifically to foster leadership and better position our members for success. Our leadership-focused activities at #AAPMR24 will provide invaluable opportunities for learning, networking and collaboration.

Among these initiatives is the Future Leaders Program, a two-year immersive experience designed to enhance leadership skills. As a proud graduate of this program's inaugural class, I can attest to the value and impact it provides. We are happy to welcome our 2024-2026 class of Future Leaders. We also want to thank our 2022-2024 outgoing Future Leaders class for their outstanding work and contributions to the Academy. You can read more about them on page 9. In addition, we are particularly excited to showcase the Academy's Innovators and Influencers Honorees program which highlights and celebrates the innovative and influential contributions our members are making in the field of PM&R, inspiring others to follow in their footsteps. Find more information about this year's inaugural class of 21 early- and mid-career members and their impact on the specialty at aapmr.org/innovatorsandinfluencers. We also hosted the Department Chairs Summit, a forum for leaders to navigate the challenges our specialty faces. The Summit focuses on executive leadership development and strategies to demonstrate the value of PM&R to both internal and external stakeholders. And we recently launched the Virtual Medical Directorship Certificate Program. This program will cover topics such as leading change, understanding roles and governing structures, organizational behavior and strategies for success, and will further enhance a medical

director's ability to lead effectively. Collectively, these initiatives not only advance our personal skills, but also help elevate the PM&R specialty by **positioning** well-trained thought-leaders in various practice settings. They also offer unique ways to connect and collaborate with future psychiatric leaders.

The Academy's commitment to leadership development is part of our broader mission to advance the specialty of PM&R and enhance the ability of our members to provide the highest quality patient care. By investing in leadership, we are investing in the future of our specialty and the patients we serve. In this era of change and uncertainty in healthcare, investing in yourself and your specialty is more crucial than ever. By honing your leadership skills, you can help shape the future of PM&R and ensure that our specialty continues to play a vital role in the healthcare system.

Navigating these challenges will require a collective effort. I encourage all members to take advantage of these opportunities and to consider how you can contribute to the leadership of our specialty. Whether it's by participating in Academy programs, taking on leadership roles in your own practice or institution, or simply advocating for our specialty and our patients, every contribution counts. Together, we can ensure that PM&R continues to play a vital role in the healthcare system and that our patients receive the care they deserve.



Academy in Action

AAPM&R is Fighting to Reduce Psychiatrist Burden by Removing Prior Authorization Barriers

- Your Academy endorsed the recently reintroduced *Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act* (H.R. 8702/S. 4532). This bipartisan legislation would help protect patients from unnecessary delays in care by streamlining and standardizing the prior authorization process under the Medicare Advantage (MA) program.
- Your Academy responded to a Request for Information (RFI) from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) related to data policies under the MA program. The comments largely focused on the need for CMS to collect more data related to prior authorization barriers currently impacting PM&R physicians and patients attempting to access rehabilitation care under the MA program. AAPM&R also joined coalition responses to this RFI from the Regulatory Relief Coalition (RRC) and the Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation (CPR).



Academy in Action

AAPM&R is Advocating for Expanded Practice Models and Enhanced Ways for Psychiatrists to Advance Patient Care through Innovative Strategies

- Your Academy submitted comments to CMS regarding the proposal to build a new Transforming Episode Accountability Model (TEAM) included in the FY 2025 Medicare Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment System Proposed Rule. AAPM&R proposed many changes to TEAM including changing the episode duration and requiring reporting of relevant outcomes to ensure access to appropriate care.