

MOBILITY MATTERS

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APTATN

CAREER CORNER

Career Opportunities

The Volunteer Voice is a publication of the Tennessee Physical Therapy Association. The magazine is published up to four times a year and is sent to all members of the APTA in Tennessee.

ADVERTISING & SUBSCRIPTIONS

All advertisements in the Volunteer Voice are accepted on the basis of conformance with the ethical standards of the American Physical Therapy Association but no effort is made to verify the accuracy of claims made in such advertisements. Acceptance of advertisements does not imply endorsement by the Volunteer Voice or by the American Physical Therapy Association.

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1/8 Page	\$ 60.00
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Job Opening and Continuing Education Columns

\$35.00 for under 100 words.

\$65.00 over 100 words, not to exceed 200 words.

Companies listing their name, address, phone number, and representative are called PATRONS.

These companies are listed in each issue of the MOBILITY MATTERS.
Cost is \$50.00 per issue.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

\$50.00 per year (3 issues) for non-members.

Please submit all articles and news

items relation to physical therapy to:

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Tennessee Health Related Boards
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Peer Assistance Program 1-615-726-4001

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APTA TENNESSEE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS



Hello friends and colleagues, I'm a month into my second year as President of APTA Tennessee, and as I reflect on the past year, two questions come to mind: How did the time go by so fast, and how did we accomplish so much? I know that sounds like a contradiction, but I think we've all felt it; you blink and a year has disappeared. When I look back at what this Association has achieved over the past twelve months, though, it's genuinely remarkable. I won't walk through a full recap of our accomplishments; I've covered those in each quarterly address, but I want you to know that I am proud of this membership for trusting us to lead the PT profession in Tennessee. I'm proud of the students I've met during my visits to the PT and PTA schools across the state. And I'm proud of the leaders within this Association who volunteer their time, energy, and expertise to move our profession forward. None of what we accomplish happens without each and every one of you.

I've always been committed to improving communication between the Chapter and our membership, and I hope I've demonstrated that commitment continues. Our chapter administrator and office staff have worked harder than ever this year to get timely, useful information out to members and potential members. We're not perfect, but I can't say enough about the dedication our staff brings to making sure you have what you need when you need it.

This summer has been a busy one for APTA Tennessee at the national level. Several members of our Board of Directors and our Tennessee delegates just returned from Portland, Oregon, where they attended the 2026 Payment Summit and the House of Delegates. APTA has made improving payment across all aspects of the profession a strategic priority, something our membership has been asking for many years. The Payment Summit was a strong start, giving Chapters and Sections specific tools to push back against poor reimbursement. I'd encourage you to [watch the video](#) APTA created highlighting recent payment wins across the country. It's a reminder that advocacy works when we show up and make the case.

APTA TENNESSEE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS CONTINUED

The House of Delegates followed that same week, and it was a great example of how Chapters and Sections can come together for quality debate, compromise, and real progress. Because both events just wrapped up, we'll be sending a follow-up communication to members once the outcomes are finalized.

On the national front, there's more good momentum. APTA recently released a Practice Advisory on AI-enabled ambient scribe technology, a topic that affects every clinic that's considering or already using AI documentation tools. The Master Class 2026 series kicks off August 21, offering expert-led courses designed to sharpen clinical skills. And volunteer opportunities are open through August 31 for members who want to help shape the future of the profession. These are tangible ways your national membership is working for you.

As the summer continues, so does our work at the Chapter level. We're already deep in legislative discussions aimed at improving the practice of physical therapy in Tennessee. Once details are finalized, we'll share what legislation we plan to put forward. But here's what I need from you: if you have a pain point in your daily practice, something that's holding you back, a barrier that seems unreasonable, a rule that doesn't make sense, tell us about it. We need to hear from you to guide our efforts. Your experiences on the ground are what shape our advocacy at the state level.

Looking ahead to fall, I know I'm not the only one ready for football and cooler weather. But the Chapter isn't slowing down. We have several events planned at both the state and district levels, so be sure to keep an eye on the APTA Tennessee website for the full calendar. Here are a few dates to know: the Tri-Cities District meets August 11 (via Zoom) for a CEU session, the Jackson District meets August 20 at Jackson State Community College, the Tri-Cities District hosts another CEU event in September at ETSU, and the Memphis District will be having a meeting on September 14th at the University of Memphis. District meetings are one of the best ways to earn CEUs, connect with colleagues, and stay current on what's happening in Tennessee PT. If you haven't attended one recently, I'd encourage you to make time.

APTA TENNESSEE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS CONTINUED

And of course, please mark your calendars for the 2026 Fall Conference on September 25th and 26th in Pigeon Forge. We're excited to be hosted by the Knoxville District and to return to one of Tennessee's most iconic destinations. We'll be at the DreamMore Resort and Spa, part of Dolly Parton's Dollywood properties. It is a beautiful setting in the mountains of East Tennessee. Bring your family, bring your colleagues, and make a weekend of it. The conference will offer excellent CEU content, networking, and a chance to connect with your fellow Tennessee PTs and PTAs in a setting that's both professional and genuinely fun. I promise you won't want to miss it.

As I wrap up, I want to step back from the updates and talk about why all of this matters. This Chapter exists because a group of physical therapists decided, seventy-five years ago, that our profession deserved a collective voice in the state of Tennessee. That voice is stronger today than it has ever been, but only because people like you choose to be part of it. Every time you attend a district meeting, every time you respond to a legislative action alert, every time you mentor a student or encourage a colleague to join, you're strengthening that voice. The challenges we face, i.e., payment reform, scope of practice, AI in documentation, workforce shortages, compliance burdens, they're real, and they're not going away. But neither are we. This Association has been advancing the profession of physical therapy in Tennessee for decades, and we're just getting started on what comes next.

Thank you for your dedication to this profession and your commitment to this Association. I'm honored to serve as your President, and I'm optimistic about what we'll accomplish together in the year ahead. I'll see you in Pigeon Forge.

Jody Swearingen, DPT, OCS, STC, COMT, CHP
President, APTA Tennessee Chapter
[**president@aptatn.org**](mailto:president@aptatn.org)

VICE PRESIDENT CORNER

Over the past several months, I've had the privilege of visiting with many of our members across Tennessee. Whether at district meetings, conferences, or legislative events, one theme continues to resonate with me. Our APTA President, Kyle Covington, recently described APTA as our "**professional home**." That phrase has stayed with me.

A home is where you belong. It's where people support one another, share ideas, celebrate successes, and work together through challenges. Your professional home is where your voice matters and where, together, we shape the future of physical therapy. APTA Tennessee is more than an association—it is a community of colleagues who are passionate about advancing our profession and improving the lives of the patients we serve.

One of the most important ways you can strengthen our profession is by becoming a Key Contact. If you've ever thought about getting involved in advocacy, there is no better time than now. During August, legislators are back in their districts and are actively meeting with constituents—that means you. Introduce yourself as the physical therapist in your community. Share how physical therapy improves lives, reduces healthcare costs, and keeps Tennesseans healthy and independent. Legislative advocacy is built on relationships. When important issues affecting our profession come before the General Assembly, it's far easier to have meaningful conversations with legislators who already know you. Instead of making a cold call, you're reaching out to someone you've already met and established trust with.

I also encourage you to become active in your local district. Our districts are where we live, work, and serve our communities. They are an opportunity to connect with colleagues who understand the unique needs of your area, develop friendships, and multiply our impact. There's less travel, more opportunities to participate, and there's a good chance you'll be working alongside others who share the same legislative districts and Key Contact relationships. Together, our voices are stronger.

Our professional home is strongest when every member participates. Whether you attend a district meeting, become a Key Contact, or simply share your thoughts with your delegates, your involvement matters. Together, we can continue to strengthen physical therapy across Tennessee and ensure our profession has a strong voice for years to come.

I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming district event—and thank you for making APTA Tennessee your professional home.

Gretchen Jackson, DPT, GCS



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Ashley Sager, PT, DPT, CMT, TDN



Jacque Bradford, PT, DPT, EdD, CHSE

KNOXVILLE DISTRICT UPDATES

A Season of Connection, Advocacy, and Preformance



Greetings from the Knoxville District! We have had an incredible spring and summer, packed with professional growth, community advocacy, and some highly anticipated hands-on learning. Whether you joined us for policy discussions or got under some weights with us, here is a look back at what our district has been up to over the last few months.

APRIL: GOOD BREWS AND GREAT COMPANY



We kicked off the spring by winding down together. In April, our members gathered at Abridged Beer Company in Knoxville for a casual district social. It was a fantastic opportunity for local PTs, PTAs, and students to catch up, network, and talk shop in a relaxed, local setting. Building a strong community starts with getting to know one another, and the turnout did not disappoint!

MAY: NAVIGATING THE LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE LANDSCAPE



In May, we shifted our focus to advocacy and professional landscape changes. Hosted by the South College Knoxville Campus, we welcomed Dr. Aron Goldfeld, an attorney for TeamHealth. Dr. Goldfeld led a crucial presentation titled Advancing Physical Therapy in Tennessee: Legal, Policy, & Legislative Priorities. He provided our members with invaluable insights into the legal frameworks shaping our practice, current policy hurdles, and the legislative priorities we need to champion to protect and advance our profession across the state.

JUNE: SUMMER RECHARGE



To keep everyone fresh and energized for a busy year, the Knoxville District took the month of June off for a well-deserved summer vacation. We hope you all took some time to rest, move, and enjoy the beautiful Tennessee summer!

KNOXVILLE DISTRICT UPDATES

A Season of Connection, Advocacy, and Performance



JULY: LIFTING, LOADING, AND MOVING "BEYOND KEGELS"

We returned from break with one of our most dynamic events yet! On July 14th, Dr. Katie Spruell joined us at Prisma Health Total Rehabilitation in Maryville for an interactive lecture and lab titled Beyond Kegels: Connecting the Pelvic Floor to Performance, Lifting, and Load Management. This wasn't just a sit-and-listen presentation. Attendees actually got hands-on, utilizing dumbbells and kettlebells to practice real-time loading and lifting strategies under weight. Dr. Spruell shared practical, high-yield cueing techniques that every clinician can use tomorrow morning—demonstrating beautifully that pelvic floor health is vital for general orthopedics, strength conditioning, and human performance, whether you are a specialized pelvic health therapist or not.



Thank you to all the speakers, hosts, and members who made these events successful. Stay tuned to our district calendar for upcoming autumn meetings, networking events, and continuing education opportunities. We can't wait to see you there!

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see you there!*



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Let's Talk!

Contact us today to learn more & apply!



Linda DeCesare

ldecesare@broadriverrehab.com

Derek Pyle, PT, DPT, OCS, FAAOMPT

APTA Tennessee Practice Chair



ABOUT ME

I'm honored to serve as APTA Tennessee Practice Chair and give back to a profession that has shaped my career.

I earned my Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from East Tennessee State University in 2011 and currently serve as Director of Operations at Executive Physical Therapy while continuing to practice clinically and teach as adjunct faculty.

Working across multiple practice settings has given me a broad perspective on the opportunities and challenges facing physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students throughout Tennessee.

“

My goal is to help every member make the most of everything APTA Tennessee has to offer by fostering collaboration, sharing resources, and supporting the continued growth of our profession.”

”

FUN FACTS



FAMILY: My wife and I are excited to welcome our first child later this year!



I ENJOY: Spending time with my wife, golfing, and staying active.



GO VOLS! I love cheering on Tennessee sports!



MY ROLE AS PRACTICE CHAIR



Strengthen communication and collaboration across all practice settings.



Increase awareness of APTA Tennessee's resources, advocacy initiatives, and educational opportunities.



Help members stay informed and engaged on issues impacting the profession.



LOOKING FORWARD

I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve and look forward to working alongside our members to continue strengthening the physical therapy profession across Tennessee.



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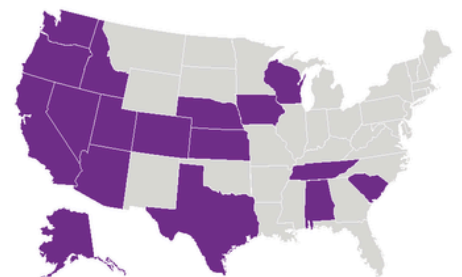
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- Posterior Tibial Nerve Stimulation
- HeartMath
- Specialized cognitive programming on a facility level (Abilities Care Approach)

Get in touch



Using Ensign as an example, Mark Parkinson points to Leadership as the difference maker for successful providers.

Mark Parkinson
AHCA/NCAL President & CEO
Skilled Nursing News • October 10, 2022



FlagshipTherapy.com

MEMPHIS DISTRICT UPDATES

Our district members were proud to participate in the Annual White Coats Summit at Baptist College of Health Sciences, where we proudly supported our profession while investing in the next generation of healthcare leaders. This inspiring event provided an opportunity to engage with hundreds of aspiring students, share our professional experiences, and highlight the many rewarding career paths available in healthcare. Together, we are helping build a stronger, more compassionate healthcare workforce for generations to come.





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PTA SIG

Fall Meeting Registration is now open!

I want to let you know that at this year's meeting there will be 2 PTA's presenting. Rabekah Gramlich will be co-presenting with Dr Kyle Boden from Knoxville Orthopedic Clinic, covering the topic of Blood Flow Restriction (BFR). This will be a hands-on course with the latest information and research-backed data to improve your outcome results. Adam Burgess will be presenting on Friday the topic is Downs Syndrome- A view through almond shaped eyes. If you attended the CEU course that was given last year, this presentation is different.

The PTA SIG will be having our 2nd in-person meeting of the year, and all members are encouraged to come. We love to put a face to a name and get to know you. At this time, the date and time have not been assigned, but keep an eye out for it. Also, closer to the time, you can reach out to one of us or contact the APTA TN office to answer any questions that you may have regarding this

The PTA SIG recently had a planning meeting for the rest of the year and is in the process of lining up CEU courses for the remainder of the year. At this time, I have listed the speakers that are lined up for those months



UPCOMING CEU COURSES

- September- TBD
- October- Krissi Moore
- November- TBD
- December-Rabekah Gramlich

Keep an eye out on the socials and the calendar of events on the APTA Tennessee website for updates. Speaking of the website, we are in the process of having our page be more visible and easier to access from the APTA Tennessee webpage, so keep your eyes open in the coming months for the updates.



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PTA SIG CONTINUED



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR SPTA'S! _____

The PTA SIG Executive Committee wants to say, "Congratulations!" to the SPTA's who passed their boards in July. Good Luck with your first PTA job.

We know how much hard work you put into your classes and toward passing your boards. You are now a voting member of the APTA Tennessee chapter, the PTA SIG, and the Early Professional SIG. Please continue to maintain your membership so that you are up on all of the latest information. Don't forget that you get a discounted rate for APTA dues, and can be paid in monthly installments. The first few years can be very confusing with a lot of questions regarding the first couple of cycles of renewing your license. Also, please consider signing up for the Early Professional Mentorship program. You are eligible for the first 5 years of clinical practice experience. You may have missed this year's program, but please go ahead and apply. It may not be too late.

*We look forward to seeing
you at the Fall Meeting!*

Invite a coworker or PT/PTA friend who wants to have some fun and earn CEU's!



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UPCOMING EVENTS



August 20

APTA TN Jackson District Meeting & CEU

August 27

APTA TN Student SIG Webinar Part 2

September 1

APTA TN Tri-Cities District CEU

September 25-26

APTA TN 2026 Fall Conference

**Visit aptatn.org to stay up to date on all
upcoming events!**