



CANDIDATE PLATFORMS

2023-2024
Election



ENGAGE - ELEVATE - EMPOWER

KATERINA DONS

MMS, PA-C

Candidate for President-Elect

Term: July 2023 - June 2024

President-Elect automatically elevates to President after their 1-year term



I became a PA by accident. In 2006, I had an incidental finding during a routine physical exam. I was only 22 years old, and I had a dissecting thoracic aneurysm. I had an amazing team of professionals to manage my care - and the PA was who I remembered most. My PA took the time to sit and explain things to me. It was my PA who made me smile and even laugh. My PA made me somewhat less terrified.

The experience also led me to volunteering with the American Heart Association. I signed up to be a survivor spokeswoman for the New Jersey Go Red For Women Movement. As a part of the team, I engage communities and Healthcare workers on the prevention of, and treatments for cardiovascular disease. I have been truly honored to work with these women for the past 15 years. And now, I get to volunteer for the American Heart Association as an Emergency Medicine PA and as survivor.

I thought an aortic dissection was tough. I thought PA school was tough. Then, I became a working mom. Suddenly, post surgical cardiac rehab and pathophysiology were no longer the most complex things I could put my mind to. I was just as thrilled to leave the house on time with both socks still on the baby.

When I joined the moderator team for PA Moms in 2020, I brought my passion for the AHA with me. I reached out to our members and promoted survivor stories, establishing a fundraising network to raise money for research that is conducted by the AHA.

In PA Moms, I've also led the CME category 1 plan of action - using #PAMSTEACHINGPAMS I coordinated presentations on topics from our own expert members. My brainchild there was to promote our sense of community by putting faces to the names on the internet. I wanted us to know that we are people, we are colleagues, and we are as brilliant as we are beautiful.

This is my vision for PAs for Women Empowerment. When I worked with the other amazing women to start this organization from the foundation up, we wanted to give Women the confidence to know that they are capable and competent. That they are leaders. That they have a voice. And when we speak together, we can do incredible things.

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KATERINA DONS

MMS, PA-C

Candidate for President-Elect



I hope to get your vote for President-Elect. I want our caucus to bring powerful and capable women to the podium and I want to hold the microphone for her. I want a woman's voice to be heard. I want her face seen. I want her thoughts understood. We all have something to learn from each other. I don't want women to be 'just as good as a man.' I want the men to wish they could be almost as good as a woman.

This is my passion: ladies in leadership, learning, and a whole lot of laughing.

I want to effect change. This past year, the PAs for Women Empowerment caucus was able to successfully put forth a resolution that requires PA Programs to clearly delineate their parental leave policies for prospective students. I loved watching it come to fruition as a member. As an elected leader, my goal is to expand upon this to include bereavement policies. I have additional goals to establish a mentorship program so that our newly graduated PAs can ask an experienced member for guidance in evaluating employment contracts and negotiating strategies. I want to establish tangible support for members and students: scholarships, a meal, a peer review, or even a surprise delivery of a silly pair of socks.

Confident women are empowered. Passionate women are empowered. Empowered women can do literally anything.

To quote one of the greatest women of all times, “Everybody needs a passion. That’s what keeps life interesting. If you live without passion, you go through life without leaving any footprints.”

Betty White

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MICHELLE GOUGH

PA-C, MPAS, MBA, DFAAPA

Candidate for President-Elect

Term: July 2023 - June 2024

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Hello, my name is Michelle Gough, PA-C, MPAS, MBA, DFAAPA and I have been advocating for the PA profession since graduating with honors from the Wichita State University PA program in 2007. My first PA role was at a federally qualified health center in Wichita Kansas, where I immediately learned the value of having a mentor. Upon arriving at the practice for my first day and finding 13 patients in the waiting room and no other providers on site, I called the head PA at the closest satellite location and we became fast friends. Since then, I have held numerous positions including head of the pm pediatric surgery and trauma team at Miami Children's Hospital, the First physician assistant at the Center for Arthritis and Rheumatology in Miami, Florida, and I now work full time in the pharmaceutical industry as a Director of peer to peer marketing for Dermavant sciences. Throughout many of these roles I have created my own path, outlining roles where PA's have not yet been, and paving the way for PAs who are coming after.

Throughout my tenure as a PA, I have served in numerous leadership positions, including the FAPA Miami Dade and Broward area representative, FAPA Membership Committee Chair, FAPA Vice President, and FAPA Education Committee chair. I have served on the AAPA House of Delegate, representing FAPA, for two years. I have attended the AAPA leadership summit and have lobbied at the state and national levels on behalf of the PA profession. In 2020, I was awarded the Distinguished Fellow from the AAPA and continue to serve on the distinguished fellow review committee within the AAPA.

I truly believe in the strength of a unified PA voice and have worked to bring strength in numbers through my involvement in constituent organizations. While a part of FAPA, I lead a membership drive, with both short and long term benchmarks, elevating the state membership to the highest level it has ever achieved- over 4000 members. Additionally, I was instrumental in creating a partnership with the FSDPA to create a statewide outreach program, highlighting National PA week and Skin Cancer awareness all within the same initiative. During this partnership, over 8,000 samples of sunscreen were handed out to Floridians across the state and conversations were held about skin cancer awareness, encouraging individuals to schedule skin checks with their local Derm PAs. Not only do I believe in people contributing strength to an organization, but also to the value of what that organization can do when pointed in the right direction- individual growth of our members, advocacy for the PA profession, and community service and outreach.

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MICHELLE GOUGH
PA-C, MPAS, MBA, DFAAPA
Candidate for President-Elect

Serving as the President-elect of the PA for Women Empowerment would be an ideal next step in my PA journey and an honor to serve our profession in this way. As my own career has transitioned from full-time patient care to only part-time patient care with full-time pharmaceutical work, I know the value that having a mentor can bring. As women, we are expected to wear multiple hats, including provider, spouse, mother, cook, household organizer, and many more. With all these stressors taking pieces of our time and energy, women are often left with an unfulfilled need. I truly believe that the mission of PA for women's empowerment can help to fulfill this need in many women. My platform statement is simple. We need to organize and mobilize the over 70,000 female PAs in this country. Second, we do that to support the PAWE network of women, including mentorship for both career and personal growth, elevating advocacy at state and national levels, and promoting outreach within our community. If we can build this strong unified voice, we will continue to professionally shatter glass ceilings, build supportive communities for our families and our patients, and grow strong women PAs who will one day take up the mantle to continue the good work. WE are women and WE can do anything- together.

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JULIA BURKHARDT

MS, PA-C

Candidate for Vice President

Term: July 2023 - June 2024



I am writing you today to consider electing me as the Vice President of the PAs for Women Empowerment. My personal values and professional accomplishments fit well with the organizations mission to engage, elevate, and empower women. I have been involved in PA leadership for the better part of a decade both at a national and state level. Additionally, as an Obstetric and Gynecology Physician Associate my life is dedicated to the empowerment of women throughout the course of their lives.

A little bit about me: I am Physician Associate who has practiced in Obstetrics and Gynecology since graduating from PA school in 2016. The majority of my clinical practice has been at a tertiary care center in Southeastern Michigan where I have been given the privilege of attending over 1,000 cesarean births along with caring for countless of pregnant patients in the Obstetrics emergency department and office settings. I have also seen what a dramatic difference there is between patients who are able to receive adequate care and those who fall through the cracks of our health care system. These gaps would be filled if women were more empowered to make choices regarding their health and were empowered to live to their full potential.

If elected, I will promise to continue to serve as a fiduciary representative of our profession - especially of the 72%+ of PAs who are women. Additionally, I would be look forward to networking with amazing PAs from around the country that are also advocating for womens empowerment in their communities.

As far as leadership and advocacy goes: I have been a PA leader since I served on the Student Academy board as the Chief Delegate in 2015-2016. I am currently on the board of Michigan Academy of PAs as the Chief Delegate to the AAPA House of Delegates and serve as a Director at Large for the Associations of PAs in Ob-Gyn. More information regarding my community and professional service is available in the attached CV. Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

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JULIA BURKHARDT

MS, PA-C

Candidate for Vice President



Vision for PAWE

If elected, I would work with the other PAs on the board of directors, committees, and the general membership to make sure that PAWE is serving our constituents and striving towards our goal of empowering women. Some ways that I envision doing this include:

- Surveying current and potential members about the barriers that they encounter as women in medicine
- Increasing the number of leadership trainings offered to PAWE members
- Support and empower members to realize their potential and see their inherent worth
- Meet members where they are and encourage them to continue on their journey to educate themselves on how PAs are integral in improving health outcomes for their patients and themselves.
- Evaluate and eliminate barriers that affect women, especially those of underrepresented populations, from gaining seats at the administrative table

I would strive towards these goals through working with the other fabulous current and future leaders. Our profession is strong because of each and every woman. This strength will only grow if we gain seats at every table.

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DEEPTHI KRISHNA

MSPAS, PA

Candidate for Vice President

Term: July 2023 - June 2024

Leadership Experience

My name is Deepthi Krishna and I am seeking your vote to serve as Vice President for 'Pas for Women Empowerment'. I have been actively involved with NYSSPA (New York State Society of Physician Assistants) over the last two years, since I began my journey as a PA student. These experiences provided me with the opportunity to learn what it takes to effectively advocate to propel our profession forward. I was elected NYSSPA student Director 2022-2023. Humbled by NY students support, I was able to assist various NYSSPA committees. Additionally, I served as Canisius PA program's student representative and as board of directors for Western New York PA Association (WNYPA); student facilitator for PAEA (PA Education Association) and board of directors for PA-S LEAD (Physician Assistant Students for Leadership Equity Anti-Racism and Diversity). As a passionate advocate for respect for the PA profession, I represent my program and PA profession on the interprofessional education (IPE) student advisory board at University at Buffalo. I am honored to be able to continue serving Pas and PA-students of NY in the capacity of NYSSPA DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) Committee chair and as an elected HOD (House of Delegate) to AAPA for NYSSPA for the term 2023-2024.

I was recently awarded AAPA 2023 'Student of the year' at the conference in Nashville, TN. I am also an active member and recipient of PA moms Advocacy & Leadership Student scholarship award 2022.

Some of my past leadership experiences include:

As an elected NYSSPA student director and involved member of NYSSPA's DEI, social media, communications and co-chair of student membership subcommittees, I had the opportunity to represent students' voices at board meetings and advocate for their needs. To aid students in their financial struggles, I assembled a financial guide that students could use in their journey as a pre-PA applicant and during PA school. Largely appreciated, NYSSPA used my work as a financial resource guide for all students in the state on NYSSPA website.

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DEEPTHI KRISHNA

MSPAS, PA

Candidate for Vice President



Experiences as Student Facilitator:

- I serve as a student facilitator through the various positions I hold. Volunteering tutor services to fellow PA students, personal statement edits, mock interviews and CASPA application. This caught the eye of PAEA's outreach manager Heather Storm, who asked me to present at PAEA's virtual diversity recruitment fair, 2022. Well received by students I was invited to present again later that year focusing on navigating PA school admissions as an international student of color. I was invited to present again on May 10th, 2023, and July 10th, 2023.
- As director and author (2022 term) of PA-S LEAD's monthly newsletters, I make a deliberate decision to choose topics to advance Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) efforts in PA academia and reduce toxic medical culture.
- I served as a student panelist at multiple conferences you could access one of the videos here <https://paslead.org/rsj-conference>
- As a facilitator for Buffalo based community and international fundraisers, I helped organize annual PA week celebrations, bake-sale fundraiser for pride month, March against gun violence, refugee service day, mental health day, cultural potluck, Black history month celebration, Food as Medicine NYSSPA presidential charity, trick-or-treat for hunger, etc.
- To create belonging among students from Ukraine, I helped organize a social hour and a fundraiser to support Global health surgical services to purchase critical medical care needs in Ukraine.

Your vision for this organization during your term in office

As a strong advocate for social justice, health equity and increasing representation of non-traditional minority students of color in PA education, I plan to work towards these goals by addressing gender bias and psychosocial vulnerabilities, which act as barriers to both healthcare access and educational opportunities. My life and work experiences rendered awareness and a strong commitment to take an active role in addressing barriers for women, especially first generation and women of color. I plan to use my lived experiences, to empower and support fellow members of PAs for women empowerment and PA Moms. I am acutely cognizant of the importance of advocacy space and how these efforts benefit PAs and our patients. I also comprehend the importance of the voice of PAs. As a dedicated advocate of our profession, I wish to continue this work to move our profession forward as a newly graduated PA. I would be honored to represent all of you as Vice president.

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MARTINE ALTIERI

PA-C, MHSc

Candidate for Vice President

Term: July 2023 - June 2024



I have been a PA in Florida for almost 13 years now. I have practiced in various specialties, and in different practice settings.

I am also part of the inaugural board of PAs in Obesity Medicine which is a Constituent Organization of AAPA as of this year, and I serve as a Director at Large on the board.

Moreover, I was part of my former employer's APC council for about 3 years, representing PAs, and advocating for better work structure, and creating a leadership pathway for PAs (APCs in general) within the company. I represented the hospital medicine PAs and NPs at the national level and attended the company's national medical leadership meetings with the board members, founding members and C-suite, along with the other company leaders and physician leaders.

Being a leader to serve our profession has been my passion, and I have always used my voice, and I currently continue to do so by volunteering with the JAAPA podcast platform, to push the profession forward, by showing how we can occupy any space and excel.

A fun fact about me is that I am a foreign medical graduate from Haiti, and I was appointed medical director of a community hospital in a small town, my father's hometown in Haiti. I served in that position for about 1 year, and my tenure ended when I left the country to move to the US.

Past and present involvement in PAWE and/or other organizations

- I have been involved with different committees; joined the FAPA Cultural Diversity Committee earlier this year.
- I just got elected HOD during the Florida Academy of Physician Assistants' recent elections last month.
- I am a volunteer with the PA foundation and the AAPA journal, JAAPA.
- I also volunteer with NCCPA, and I have conducted some work with the development and maintenance of the Hospital Medicine CAQ.

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MARTINE ALTIERI

PA-C, MHSc

Candidate for Vice President



My vision for this organization during my term in office.

I would be honored to represent and serve the PAs for women empowerment organization in the 2023-2024 term. I strongly feel that the mission and vision of this organization totally align with mine. I am a firm believer in women empowerment, and I strive to make a difference in the healthcare industry in general by promoting women in leadership and encouraging more female PAs to get involved and make their voices heard. It would be a humbling experience for me to work with other thoughtful women and leaders who, like me, are dedicated to advance the PA profession. I think PAs have a critical role to play in the healthcare delivery system. Therefore, we need representation, and as a profession dominated by female, I think we have the power to drive those changes.

As the Vice President of PAWE, I will work to advance the interests of PAs in general, to drive change and equity in our communities, also to promote policies that support the growth of our profession. I want to raise awareness and move this organization forward; my goal is to get it recognized nationally in different avenues and bring the spotlight on all the amazing PA women working tirelessly to make our profession #1 in the healthcare industry. I want to utilize this platform to advance and push our profession forward by advocating and empowering women particularly to show the benefits that we can all bring to the table. I plan on helping creating programs that will encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion because representation matters! I intend to increase visibility of PAs already providing high quality patient-centered care and continue to assist the new graduates with the tools to carry over our mission of being one of the most reliable and distinguished profession in the healthcare industry. I am passionate about women leaders in medicine in general, and the development of the PA profession, thus, it would be an honor for me to serve on the board of such an amazing organization founded by skilled and dedicated women in the profession.

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JACKIE HUFF

PA-C

Candidate for Treasurer

Term: July 2023 - June 2025



As a knowledgeable, dedicated, and financially stable PA for 12 years of practice, I am requesting support to serve the PAs for Women Empowerment caucus as Treasurer.

During my childhood, I gained thoughtful and pertinent education about financial planning and allocation of funds. I was taught to structure a household budget, calculate net loss/gain, and invest funds for growth in both short and long term plans. As an adult, I have used these skills to maintain personal financial clarity, throughout times of gain and times of loss. I have knowledge of several different budgeting tools and programs and feel confident in my abilities to learn new software if ever necessary.

As current Community Outreach Chair and Chief Delegate for PAs for Women Empowerment, I uphold the mission and vision of this caucus and look forward to continuing my service to this impactful group of women.

Over the next two years I expect the opportunity to report quarterly gains as we take our strong foundation for women into the next stage of growth in our profession and community. Thank you for your consideration.

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REBECCA DEITZER

DMSc, MS, PA-C

Candidate for Treasurer

Term: July 2023 - June 2025



I have been working as a PA for more than 10 years, specializing in Hematology / Oncology. Within my institute, I am the lead PA for the Liquid Tumor division of our Provider Informatics Leadership Committee. I also contribute to numerous clinical informatics committees to facilitate provider utilization of new EHR updates, documentation and enhancements to our current system. I am a member of our APP Professional Development committee, working to create incentives and promote career advancement in our institute. I am also part of the New York State Society of PAs (NYSSPA) Leadership Committee and a former Board member of the Western New York PA Association.

Within the community, I am very active in my local Girl Scout Council. I have volunteered for over 10 years as a Troop Leader and am a Service Unit Manager (responsible for the oversight of 25+ troops in my town). I currently have experience as a Finance Consultant for my local troops to maintain accounts, records and ledgers. I also volunteer as a mentor to girls who are pursuing the highest award in Girl Scouts, the Gold Award.

I would be honored to represent the PAs for Women Empowerment as Treasurer. I have a strong organizational background and experience in the position. Through Girl Scouts, and most recently at the AAPA Conference in Nashville, I have seen how strong, supportive and inclusive we are as women. I have seen how these role models have shaped youth, and how they continue to shape our PA profession. By being a part of this dynamic organization, I seek to provide opportunities for both individual learning and cooperative growth to continue to rise above our challenges, strengthen and celebrate our community.

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ELISA LADAW

PA-S2

Candidate for Student Director

Term: July 2023 - June 2024



After uprooting my life from California to Virginia to pursue becoming a PA, I knew that I could do whatever I put my mind to despite how difficult it may be. I've been fortunate to have experienced a supportive network of strong, female peers that have helped me grow into a future PA-C and go after opportunities presented to me. As a result, I've been inspired throughout my pre-PA and current PA time to advocate, engage, and empower those around me.

I am a current second year clinical year student at Radford University Carilion. I've been grateful to have been involved in leadership and organizations that align with my interests in creating a larger impact. I served as an AAPA HOD Student Delegate and was able to pass important legislation advocating for students and current PAs. I am also currently a VAPA student member, Society of PAs in Genetics and Genomics (SPAGG) student member and remain active in my program's student society volunteer efforts. Prior to PA school, I was involved in my undergraduate multicultural organizations with the Filipino and Asian American communities and held leadership positions in my church organization. As a Student Director, I would apply the same efforts from previous experiences to advocate for PAWE and students. With the female presence of our profession and medicine overall, I hope to champion the female voice and recognize the amazing women that are making a difference.

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RAQUELLE AKAVAN

MS, PA-C

Candidate for Chief Delegate

Term: July 2023 - June 2024



I am an experienced and dedicated PA with over 11 years of experience, seeking your support as a delegate for PAs for Women Empowerment (PAWE) in the AAPA 2024 House of Delegates meeting.

I have demonstrated strong leadership and advocacy for the PA community throughout my career. As the Director of Clinical Education at South University in Austin, I actively empower PAs and promote their professional growth.

As the founder of PA Moms and PAs for Women Empowerment Constituent Organizations, I have led impactful campaigns recognized by the AAPA and PA Foundation, earning us the Constituent Organization Outreach and Advocacy Award in 2021.

Having served as a Delegate in several previous House of Delegates meetings and contributing as an author of resolutions, I possess firsthand experience in the important work conducted within the House. You can count on me to have the courage to speak on complex issues within our profession and vote in the best interest of our members.

I am dedicated to advancing the mission and goals of PAWE and supporting women's empowerment in the PA profession. I will use my skills and unwavering dedication to represent and advocate for PAs with your best interest in mind.

With my qualifications and passion, I am uniquely qualified to serve as a delegate for PAs for Women Empowerment. I am eager to contribute to the organization and the profession, furthering our mission and vision.

Thank you for your consideration,

Raquelle Akavan

Founding President, PAs for Women Empowerment

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AMANDA BUCKNER

MSPAS, PA-C

Candidate for Chief Delegate

Term: July 2023 - June 2024

I have been a practicing, licensed Physician Associate since 2014. I graduated from University of Pittsburgh Physician Associate Program in 2013 after being awarded Virginia Kaufman Award for Excellence. I mentored and tutored fellow students during my time at University of Pittsburgh.

Currently I am employed at University of Rochester Medical Center Urology. I have been involved in the hiring process for my team, a responsibility I take very seriously. Additionally, I have created an APP Education Series for my team. The primary focus of these sessions is updating all APPs (PA and NP alike) on current and upcoming trends in the world of Urology and provide very practical information for care of patients in our clinics. I am an active member and in good standing within AAPA, AUA, SUNA, UAPA. I have not previously held a leadership role within PA Organizations though I am hopeful to begin this journey.

During my term in office my vision for this organization encompasses growth and increased visibility among women in the profession. What interests me most is getting involved, learning from other leaders in the group and then imparting my knowledge on others in the profession.

Thank you for giving me a chance to become involved and engaged.

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ERIN HUNT

MSPAS, PA-C

Candidate for Chief Delegate

Term: July 2023 - June 2024



I am honored to announce my candidacy to represent PAs for Women Empowerment at the AAPA House of Delegates. As a passionate advocate for women's rights and a dedicated physician assistant, I am committed to using my skills and experience to advance the cause of women's empowerment in our community.

After receiving my bachelor's degree in biology from Siena College, I graduated from Pace University-Lenox Hill Hospital PA Program with a master's degree in PA Studies in 2012. I have been a PA for eleven years and have held a position of clinical leadership for the past four years. I am a Lead PA at one of the largest Urgent Care companies in the country, where I manage eighteen centers and oversee about ninety PAs and APRNs. In this role, I advocate for PAs during high-level policy meetings, coach and mentor fellow PAs, and act as project manager for numerous special programs within the company. I am the Clinical Quality Champion for my company's largest market, which includes fifty-seven centers and over three-hundred providers, overseeing our many quality improvement programs and helping our providers optimize their performance. I run our award-winning antibiotic stewardship program, which has produced best-in-industry outcomes. I created an emergency preparedness program for my company, including a clinical training program providing mock-code scenarios, and presented this topic at a national conference. I manage my market's Community-Family Advisory Council, which connects our community and the highest levels of my company's leadership. I recently earned a grant to study HIV testing in the Urgent Care setting, with the ultimate goal of petitioning legislation to expand access to HIV screening in New York State. As a passion project, I created a support group for working moms at my company and have used this platform to advocate for policy change regarding maternity leave initiation, return to work, and expressing breast milk in the workplace.

My vision as the representative for PAs for Women Empowerment at the AAPA House of Delegates is to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in all aspects of our profession, especially pertaining to leadership positions within the healthcare industry. My platform is built on four key pillars:

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ERIN HUNT

MSPAS, PA-C

Candidate for Chief Delegate



1. **Advocacy:** I will strongly advocate for policies and initiatives that support women's advancement in healthcare leadership positions. This includes advocating for equal pay, creating mentorship and leadership development programs, and increasing the representation of women in decision-making positions.
2. **Education:** Education is the foundation for empowering women to take on leadership roles. As a delegate, I will work to create and promote educational opportunities that specifically address the unique challenges that women face in leadership positions.
3. **Mentorship:** Mentorship is vital to empowering women to achieve their goals. I will work to provide mentorship opportunities to women, especially those in underrepresented communities.
4. **Collaboration:** Collaboration is essential to creating lasting change. As a delegate, I will work to build strong partnerships with other organizations and leaders in healthcare to advance our shared goals of promoting women in leadership.

I am committed to working tirelessly to advance the cause of women's empowerment in our community. With your support, I am confident we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all women.

Empowering women doesn't just mean giving us a seat at the table. It means actively lifting one another up, amplifying our voices, and creating a culture of support and collaboration. When we lift one another up, we rise together, and that's how we'll create a world where women are truly represented and empowered in every sphere of leadership.

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to serving as your representative in the AAPA House of Delegates.