

Questions for Candidates for APHA President-Elect

1) What are the greatest challenges and opportunities for APHA today?

The American Public Health Association faces a number of challenges. These include rebuilding and reclaiming the public's trust in our work, providing adaptive solutions to challenges affecting the Public Health workforce, the need for increased funding of our Public Health efforts, and the imminent threats associated with climate change.

Leveraging our collective strength provides the opportunity to effectively address health equity for all populations. It allows us to consider our approaches to equity not only by "race" but also by disability status, gender identity, and ethnicity. Health equity issues of special concern to me arise not only from my years of work in the field, but also from my lived experience. These issues are reproductive justice, Black maternal health, Indigenous and immigrant health, addressing the health of unsheltered populations, food equity, and healthy aging. I also acknowledge that provision of timely and adequate mental health services and achieving safety from gun violence are significant issues currently being addressed by APHA.

APHA is already boldly leading Public Health efforts and yet a variety of opportunities remain. In fact, often what we view as a challenge may also present an opportunity. Our ability to respond to and address numerous Public Health issues through the joint efforts of our affiliates, sections, caucuses, forums, and the APHA staff speaks to the multifaceted, historical, and distinctive nature of the American Public Health Association. It also clearly supports our status as the leading Public Health organization in the nation. As a result, APHA is positioned to collaborate strategically across sectors with both traditional and non-traditional partners thereby providing the organization with opportunities to synergistically work towards solutions to achieve the maximum impact on advocacy, policy development, and funding of Public Health endeavors.

2) As President-Elect, how will you use your role to elevate the voice and impact of APHA (at the global, national, state and local level)?

Should I be elected to the role of President-Elect, I will continue to be a representative voice of APHA values and mission. I will ensure I am speaking and advocating in alignment with APHA's strategic plan and vision. In addition, I would continue to give voice to and be part of the effort to successfully address a number of pressing issues including reproductive justice, maternal health (particularly among African-American and Indigenous women), and rethinking funding strategies for Public Health (particularly in marginalized and under-resourced communities). Most of all, I would like to serve as a voice to bring potential students into the field as I have for most of my career.

In addition to being a physician and a Public Health professional, I am the parent of four adult children and have been proud to walk beside them as they express their identity and secure supportive, gender-affirming healthcare where necessary. More presently than ever before, my experience as a parent and an ally in the LGBTQIA+ community has led me to the question, "is everyone at the table?" Are we effectively including all the talent, brilliance, and innovation each of our member communities offer?

Fostering a sense of community among all constituents is vital. When done well, this cultivation of belonging and community not only strengthens external relationships, it also builds momentum and resources that strengthen our organization, leading to greater local and regional effectiveness as well as national and global recognition.

In recognition of the unique role of the President-Elect, my preference is to utilize clear, consistent communication and active solicitation of feedback to add value, perspective, and insight to my service and endeavors on behalf of the APHA membership. This role should also be prepared to support APHA staff and membership as we work to leverage and strengthen our collaboration with other Public Health organizations to further enhance an aligned message from the local level to the global level.

APHA is a distinguished and preeminent organization that is demonstrating a commitment to building a vibrant, community-engaged, diversity-focused, health in all policies approach centered around creating the healthiest nation in a generation. The next phase of growth will require more of the determination and hard work APHA's constituencies have so clearly demonstrated to date. I would be humbled and honored to be selected as one of the servant leaders in the effort.