

Meet APMA's New Executive Director Meghan McClelland

APMA's New CEO shares her agenda for the Association.

Meghan McClelland, MBA, a long-time association management professional, joined APMA as the new executive director and CEO in late August. McClelland came to APMA from the Maryland Hospital Association, replacing James R. Christina, DPM, who retired in March 2024.

In her first months on the job, McClelland has impressed many within the profession with her high energy, curiosity, and collaborative nature. *Podiatry Management* recently spoke with her to learn more about her background, her first impressions of podiatric medicine, and her plans for APMA.

Podiatry Management: Tell us about yourself and your professional background.

McClelland: There are three things about my background that I tend to highlight because I believe they are foundational to my leadership approach:

First, I am a military brat. Both my grandfathers, my uncle, and my father were in the military. I moved more than 10 times by the time I finished college. I've had an opportunity to meet a lot of different people, in different parts of the country, with different backgrounds and experiences. It made me good at listening and assessing situations, and I take this same approach in my professional career.

Second, I started my career in Human Resources. I think successful organizations—especially membership organizations—are rooted in their peo-



Meghan McClelland, MBA

ple. Especially, membership organizations. We are an extension of our members to the larger public and, therefore, we must hold ourselves to the highest level of customer service and reflect the professionalism and commitment of our members to others.

Last, I've spent my entire career in health-care association management and advocacy, focusing on improving the way healthcare systems operate and ensuring access to quality care for patients. Before joining APMA, I was with the Maryland Hospital Association (MHA), where I had the privilege of working with hospitals across the state to navigate challenges such as health-care reform and workforce shortages. My ex-

perience spans both leadership roles and strategic advocacy, which have prepared me to lead organizations through times of significant change.

PM: How do you think your previous role with MHA has prepared you for this new role leading APMA?

McClelland: Working with MHA gave me deep insights into how health-care systems function at both the state and federal levels and how critical it is for associations to advocate on behalf of their members. I gained firsthand experience in addressing complex issues—such as legislation, workforce development, and patient care access—that will translate directly into the work APMA does for podiatrists. Leading advocacy efforts and managing relationships with policymakers, stakeholders, and health systems gave me a strong foundation for engaging with similar challenges here at APMA.

PM: You are the first non-podiatrist to lead the organization in decades. How do you think your “outside” perspective can help the organization and the profession, and what would you say to those who believe a podiatrist should be at the helm at APMA?

McClelland: I believe new, fresh perspectives on issues are always healthy and valuable for organizations, especially in organizations as dynamic as APMA. Coming from outside the profession allows me to see opportunities for growth and innovation that might not be as ev-

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ident to someone deeply embedded in the field. Additionally, my association management background will allow me to be a good steward of member resources and leverage those resources to the best effect for the field. That said, I also

McClelland: I've already had the opportunity to meet with many leaders in the profession, and their insights have been invaluable. The more I hear directly from podiatrists about their day-to-day challenges, the better I can advocate for meaningful change. I encourage all members to continue reach-

with stakeholders within the profession. What have you learned so far?

McClelland: One of my biggest takeaways has been just how passionate and dedicated podiatrists are about both their patients and their profession. I have worked in health-care for more than 20 years with a variety of clinicians, but none showed the dedication I see from podiatrists. I hope to build on this passion and dedication through APMA to meet the goals of the field.

“I’m committed to listening and learning from our members...”

recognize the importance of podiatric expertise, which is why I'm committed to listening and learning from our members, the experts who live and breathe podiatric medicine and surgery every day. My role is to bring a broader health-care perspective, ask the right questions, and amplify the voice of podiatrists. Together, we can create strategies that benefit both the profession and patient care.

PM: What are your highest priorities as you come up to speed in your new position?

McClelland: My immediate priorities are to deepen my understanding of the podiatric profession and its current challenges. I'm focused on a few key areas:

Advocacy: Our staff and volunteer leaders are working to ensure that APMA is advocating effectively at the state and federal levels, particularly in terms of scope-of-practice modernization, parity, and fair reimbursement for care delivered by a podiatrist.

Membership Engagement: I want to strengthen our relationship with current members and attract new ones by making sure APMA provides value in terms of advocacy, education, and professional support.

Research and Education: We're working to increase awareness of the importance of foot and ankle health and the essential role podiatrists play in preventive care and treatment.

Operational Effectiveness: It is incumbent upon us to manage the resources of the organization for the most value of the members and advancement of the field.

PM: How can the profession help you to learn the ropes? To advance APMA's goals?

ing out and sharing their thoughts with me—whether through formal meetings, email, or during our annual events. Engaging in open dialogue will help me and the APMA team stay aligned with what the profession truly needs.

PM: APMA is often the subject of criticism in PM News. How do you think the association can improve its standing among members and attract new members?

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McClelland: It's important to acknowledge concerns when they are raised and to view criticism as an opportunity for growth. To improve our standing, we need to do a better job of communicating our successes, listening more closely to our members, and ensuring they see value in their APMA membership. APMA is the advocate for podiatry, and I'm committed to increasing transparency in our operations, making sure members know what APMA is doing on their behalf and how they can get involved in shaping the organization's direction. We also need to make APMA accessible and relevant to new podiatrists, especially those just entering the field, by addressing the issues that matter most to them—whether it's student loan debt, residency training, or scope of practice.

PM: You have certainly been active in your first weeks on the job, meeting

PM: What can we expect to see in the year ahead from APMA?

McClelland: This year, you'll see APMA doubling down on advocacy and focusing our priorities to provide the most member value. This will require collaborative partnerships with our key stakeholders in and outside of podiatry, strategic focus and prioritization, piloting and driving data-driven initiatives, and evolving or shedding

programs and initiatives that no longer serve the membership. You can also expect increased engagement with both policymakers and the public to raise the profile of the podiatric profession and foot and ankle health in general.

PM: What else should PM readers know?

McClelland: I want PM readers to know that I am here to listen and to serve. My goal is to build on the strong foundation that APMA has developed over the years, while also bringing a fresh perspective to the challenges we face. I look forward to working closely with all of you to make APMA the most effective advocate for podiatric medicine that it can be. Please don't hesitate to reach out—I'm always eager to hear your thoughts and ideas about how we can move the profession forward together. PM