

**Candidate Name:** Kathryn (Katie) Palano

**Nomination Position:** Neuro SIG Chair

**Degrees Earned & Certifications:**

Doctorate of Physical Therapy – 2015

Clinical Specialist in Neurologic Physical Therapy – 2018

Master of Public Health in Parks & Recreation - 2022

**EXPERIENCE:**

**Clinical:**

Rehab Without Walls (since Jan. 2021)

- Lead Physical Therapist in a multi-disciplinary home & community neurorehabilitation program

Saco Bay Physical Therapy (since Dec. 2020)

- Prosthetic Rehab Program Lead
- Clinician in a multi-discipline neurologic outpatient clinic

Shirley Ryan Ability Lab (formally the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago)

- Sept. 2015-Aug. 2020
- Senior physical therapist on the general rehabilitation/complex medical unit of the acute inpatient rehabilitation hospital.

Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital Cape Cod

- Sept. 2014 - Sept. 2015
- Internship in an outpatient orthopedic and neurologic clinic

**Academia:**

Franklin Pierce University

- Adjunct Professor/Lead Instructor for DPT Program course: “Psychosocial Issues in Healthcare”

Indiana University Bloomington

- Adjunct Professor/Lead Instructor for:
  - o Undergraduate Kinesiology Courses:
    - Programming for Age-Associated Medical Conditions
    - Determinants of Active Living for Older Adults
  - o Graduate Public Health Course:
    - Human Health, Quality of Life, and Natural Environments

University of New England

- Associated Faculty/Lab instructor for DPT courses:
  - o PT Management of Adults with Disorders of the Neuromuscular System
  - o PT Management of Patients with Disorders of the Cardiovascular & Pulmonary Systems

Tufts University

- Associated Faculty/Lab instructor for DPT course: Prosthetics & Orthotics

**Current Employment:**

- Clinician with Rehab Without Walls and Saco Bay Physical Therapy
- Adjunct professor with Indiana University Bloomington and Franklin Pierce University

- Associated faculty for University of New England

**Community Service:**

- Advocated for an accessible route to be added to Mother's Beach in Kennebunk, ME
- Created a free weekly Nordic Walking Program at Hope Woods in Kennebunk, ME

**Professional Contributions:**

- Presentations:
  - o Physical Therapy Practice: Leveraging the Health Benefits of Nature for the 2023 Maine Student Conference
  - o Accessible and Inclusive Outdoor Recreation at the 2024 Maine Land Conservation Conference
  - o Parks and Recreation as Public Health Infrastructure for Society of Outdoor Recreation Professions
  - o Accessible and Inclusive Recreation at the 2023 Maine Recreation and Park Association's Annual Conference
  - o Brain Injury Recovery: Leveraging the Health Benefits of Nature for the 2023 Defining Moments in Brain Injury conference
  - o Physical Therapy Practice: Leveraging the Health Benefits of Nature for the 2022 Colorado Health Promotion Symposium
  - o DEI Within Your Outdoor Club- connecting ALL Maine teens to the outdoors for the Teens for Trails' Outdoor Club Leadership Conference
- Professional Writing:
  - o Contributed case studies to the text, "Nature-Based Allied Health Practice" by Amy Wagenfeld and Shannon Marder

**APTA Service History:**

- Founded the Maine Neuro SIG in Dec. 2023
- Working with the Environmental PT Catalyst Group since its inception in Sept. 2023
- Member of the APTA Academy of Neurologic Physical Therapy, Academy of Leadership and Innovation, and Health & Wellness Committee

**Please explain how your experience and expertise could be utilized in the nomination position applied for to further the objectives of the Chapter:**

As the current Chair of the Neuro SIG, I have gained a better understanding of the structure, function, and systems of the Maine APTA over the past year. This experience will facilitate improved collaboration and advocacy to support the Neuro SIG within the Maine APTA and increase engagement in the next year.

As someone who strongly believes and participates in lifelong learning, I plan to use my position as Chair of the Neuro SIG to promote access to good quality neuro-specific continuing education— particularly as Maine updates professional licensure requirements to include continuing education. This will also facilitate increased engagement with the Neuro SIG and develop a supportive community of PT and PTA's to continue to elevate neuro practice in Maine.

**Explain your perceptions regarding the direction the Chapter should take in the future and how your goals for the nominated position will affect this change:**

Since founding the Neuro SIG in Dec. 2023 and acting as Chair, I have put together a leadership team and collaborated with the leadership team to perform a needs assessment survey for neuro practitioners, collected data of neuro specific equipment, resources, and clinics in the state of Maine to be posted on the Neuro SIG website, and created a Neuro Track for the ME APTA Continuing Education Conference.

During 2025, we hope to schedule quarterly Neuro SIG meetings open to both Maine APTA members and nonmembers to create community and elicit feedback, plan quarterly inservices on neuro-specific topics, finalize the neuro resource list and post to the Neuro SIG website, collaborate with the pediatric SIG to create resource for adaptive sports and accessible and inclusive recreation opportunities, continue to offer a Neuro Track at the APTA Maine 2025 Continuing Education Conference, and collaborate with the Maine APTA and other SIGs on additional opportunities throughout the year.

*Modified by ck for website purposes*