

**Joint Government Affairs Committee (JGAC)
APTA Home Health & APTA Geriatrics**

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 12, 2026

Time: 8:30 PM ET

Location: Zoom

Attendees: Eva Norman, Ellen Strunk, Kevin Cezat, Steven Osovsky, Jamie Kuettel, Silke Mildenerger, Justin Elliott, Tara Maroney

Absent: Amy Hedrick, Denise Wentzell, Phil Goldsmith, Andrew Mordan

1. Welcome

Dr. Eva Norman called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees.

2. Congressional & Regulatory Update (Justin Elliott)

Justin provided a federal advocacy update.

Department of Education Proposed Rule

- Public comment period closed March 2 regarding the proposed rule on professional degree definitions.
- Over **100,000 comments** were submitted; the Department is counting ~80,000 as unique.
- Final rule expected **April–May (must be published by July 1)**.
- Litigation is anticipated if the final rule is unchanged.
- Congress could potentially invalidate the rule through legislation, though timing likely extends into 2027.

National Health Service Corps

- A coalition letter supporting PT inclusion was submitted, including support from major healthcare groups and the **American Farm Bureau**.
- New legislation includes **dedicated funding for PTs (approx. \$15M annually for 10 years)** to address concerns about reducing the current funding pool.

Medicare Payment Reform

- Remains the top federal advocacy priority.
- Congress has spent **~\$15B over the past five years on short-term payment fixes** rather than permanent reform.
- APTA submitted comments to the **House Ways & Means Committee** and will submit comments to the **House Energy & Commerce Committee**.

MPPR Repeal

- APTA will release a **coalition letter and press release next week** supporting repeal of the Multiple Procedure Payment Reduction.
- Legislation is being drafted; a **Republican co-sponsor is currently being sought**.
- Goal is to introduce the bill this year to position it for action in the next Congress.

Prior Authorization

- APTA and partner organizations are releasing **joint principles addressing prior authorization abuse**, particularly for therapy services.
- A therapy-specific **prior authorization reform bill** for PT/OT under Medicare Advantage is under development.

Advocacy Events

- **PT Day on Capitol Hill:** next month
- **APTA Payment Advocacy Summit:** July 10–11, Portland, OR (prior to House of Delegates)
 - Includes tracks on legislation, digital health/AI, payment models, and business strategies.

Legislative Priorities

1. Medicare payment reform (including Rep. Ruiz's MEI legislation)
2. National Health Service Corps inclusion
3. Department of Education rule response

Justin emphasized the urgency of addressing a **2.5% Medicare payment cut scheduled for January 2027**.

3. Capitol Hill Day

Several members indicated they are attending Capitol Hill Day (Tara, Ellen, Jamie).

Discussion emphasized the importance of **clear legislative asks** when meeting with congressional offices. Current priority issues will focus on:

- Medicare payment reform
- National Health Service Corps inclusion
- Department of Education rule response

4. Advocacy Strategy Discussion

Eva shared insights from recent meetings with **Senate leadership and other senators**, noting strong bipartisan concern about **veterans' access to care**.

The group noted that **data on veterans' access to PT services could strengthen advocacy efforts**.

5. Task Force Updates

Telehealth & Digital Care Policy Task Force

Leads: Kevin Cezat, Steven Osovsky

- A **position statement draft** has been developed.
- Task force meeting scheduled next week to review and edit the draft.
- Subcomponents of the project are underway, including a **federal policy brief**.
- **Paras stepped down** due to a change in availability.
- Current membership is approximately **7 members**, which is sufficient for current deliverables.

Payment Reform & Value-Based Care Task Force

Lead: Amy Hedrick (update provided by Silke)

- Work has focused on drafting a statement.
- A more consistent meeting structure is being established.
- Charter feedback is still being finalized.
- Silke will **follow up with Amy regarding the charter status**.

6. Advocacy Infrastructure & Communications

Website Updates

- Eva continues regular coordination with **APTA Home Health staff**, who are maintaining strong communication with members.
- Ellen will follow up with **Alex regarding the APTA Geriatrics website updates**.

Articles & Communications (Ellen Strunk)

Current article assignments include:

- **National MS Month article** – Steven (submitted)
- **AI in Healthcare** – Ellen
- **Administrative Burden & Burnout** – Andrew
- **FMI Measure** – Kevin
- **MedPAC Report Summary** – Ellen

- **Advocacy Day Preparation Article** – Silke

Members were encouraged to **review upcoming article topics in the shared Google Drive and volunteer.**

Article guidelines:

- **Short communications:** ~200 words
- **Quarterly newsletter articles:** ~2,000–3,000 words

Thinkific Platform (Tara Maroney)

The new **Thinkific member platform** is intended to support communication among APTA Geriatrics members.

Key points:

- Currently ~15 members on the platform.
- It can be used for:
 - member discussions
 - article sharing
 - advocacy updates
 - real-time communication.

Issues identified:

- Platform is **difficult to locate on the website.**
- Staff have been asked to improve visibility (including homepage links).

Next steps:

- Tara will **work with APTA Geriatrics staff to improve navigation.**
- Tara will **connect with other SIGs using Thinkific to gather best practices.**

7. Key Contact Recruitment

- The committee currently has **16 key contacts (corrected from meeting).**
- Another **recruitment email will be sent next week.**
- Four key contacts are attending **Capitol Hill Day with travel support.**

The committee is seeking a **volunteer to coordinate key contact engagement**, including:

- mentoring new key contacts
- sharing advocacy updates
- helping connect them to committee activities.

Silke expressed interest but cannot commit currently due to personal responsibilities. The committee will continue seeking a volunteer.

8. Next Meeting

Thursday, April 9, 2026
8:30 PM ET