



Executive Search



Chief Executive Officer

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The Opportunity

[The American Academy of PAs](#) (AAPA) located in Alexandria, VA near Washington, DC is conducting a search for their Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Founded in 1968, AAPA is the national professional society for physician assistants (PAs). AAPA represents a profession of more than 131,000 PAs, approximately 3500 non-certified PAs and some 25,000 students across all medical and surgical specialties in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, and the uniformed services.

AAPA is the only organization which represents all PAs in every specialty and practice setting. AAPA advocates and educates on behalf of the profession and the patients PAs serve. AAPA works to ensure the professional growth, personal excellence and recognition of PAs. The organization also enhances the ability of PAs to improve the quality, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness of patient-centered healthcare.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO is responsible for ensuring that AAPA serves the needs and interests of the organization's membership in accordance with AAPA's mission and vision of transforming health through patient-centered, team-based medical practice. The CEO will be responsible for leading and managing the execution of AAPA's strategic plan to achieve the organization's strategies, tactics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The CEO leads AAPA's advocacy efforts and builds effective relationships with members and stakeholder organizations. The CEO creates a professional culture of accountability and member service and manages a sustained, fiscally sound, and transparent operating and financial structure.

The CEO must have a track record of leading, managing and building high-performing teams and directing an organization in the midst of significant change. They should have experience serving as a chief advocate and spokesperson for an organization and possess knowledge of health care policy. AAPA seeks an innovative thinker, a strong relationship builder, and a communicator who can represent the profession and organization externally.

American Academy of PAs: An Overview

AAPA has more than 60,000 members, 100 staff, and a \$26 million operating budget. AAPA's mission is to lead the profession and empower their members to advance their careers and enhance patient health. AAPA's mission is also to ensure the professional growth, personal excellence and recognition of physician assistants, and to support their efforts to enable them to improve the quality, accessibility and cost-effectiveness of patient-centered health care.

As described in the organization's vision statement, AAPA is the leader in providing support and advocacy for PAs, advancing the profession, transforming health care, and championing patient-centered care. The mission, vision, and strategic plan have defined the course AAPA has steadfastly followed.

About PAs

PAs are medical professionals who diagnose illness, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and often serve as a patient's principal healthcare provider. PAs practice in every state and in every medical setting and specialty, improving healthcare access and quality.

Educated at the master's degree level, PAs complete 2,000 hours of clinical rotations in family medicine, internal medicine, general surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine, and psychiatry. Trained as medical generalists, PAs obtain diagnostic and treatment skills in all areas of medicine and for all patients, regardless of age or gender. As a leading force of change in health care, PAs are now in decision-making positions, and are helping organizations meet quality metrics and improve care.

More than 50 years since its inception, the PA profession has become pivotal to how health care is delivered. In 2019, the PA profession was recognized by US News & World Report as the #1 best job in health care.

Structure of AAPA

AAPA's leadership is comprised of several bodies that ensure the organization is effectively representing PAs. The Board of Directors is responsible for setting the strategic course of the organization, aligned to AAPA's mission and vision. The Board is responsible for the Academy's corporate actions that direct management of the organization, establish organizational policies, and direct the assets of the organization. In practice, this has a variety of implications from the adoption and oversight of the Academy's annual budget, to the recognition of constituency groups, to external and public outreach.

The Board's work is supported by a number of [Board committees](#) and [volunteer commissions and work groups](#) that provide additional council and expertise.

AAPA's professional policies are set by the House of Delegates (HOD), which meets once a year, and implemented by the Board. The HOD is made up of representatives from the chartered chapters, specialty organizations, the Student Academy, and the recognized caucuses and special interest groups.

The Academy's commissions, work groups, and task forces analyze, evaluate, and recommend new programs and policies and handle charges from the Board and HOD. Member projects and activities are assisted by the AAPA staff.

CEO Role and Responsibilities

The CEO will serve as the chief staff executive of AAPA with full authority for the management of its affairs. The CEO will be responsible for overall strategic management, administration and operation of headquarters, and all staff. The CEO will formulate recommendations and advise the Board regarding the affairs of AAPA. The CEO will implement AAPA's policy as determined by the Board and help guide

the organization's strategy. Direct reports to the CEO include the senior leadership team responsible for overseeing the various functional departments of AAPA. Principal duties and responsibilities of the CEO include:

- **Advocacy:** Lead AAPA's advocacy efforts, such as Optimal Team Practice (OTP) and development of the advocacy agenda, including with political and regulatory bodies, the media, physician organizations and the public.
- **Relationship building:** Build effective relationships with members and stakeholder organizations such as the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA), National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), and the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), as well as other relevant medical associations, government agencies, legislators, health care organizations, employers, AAPA employees and others.
- **Culture:** Create a professional culture of trust, transparency, accountability and member service. The CEO should encourage innovation and exploration of new ideas and approaches.
- **Financial management:** Manage a sustained, fiscally sound, and transparent operating and financial structure.
- **People management:** Oversees the senior management team and a staff of approximately 100 indirect reports.
- **Strategic planning:** Lead the strategic planning process. AAPA's current plan runs through 2020.
- **Spokesperson:** Serve as an effective spokesperson for AAPA, clearly articulating the vision and value of the organization with the media.
- **Member relations:** Build upon AAPA's value proposition to PAs: serving the needs and interests of members.

Mission Achievement

To achieve its mission and vision, AAPA has developed a 2020 Management Operating Plan. The six goals and objectives listed below represent some primary areas of focus for the new CEO. Detailed KPIs and metrics are described for each goal in the plan:

- Fostering Organizational Sustainability
- Equipping PAs for Expanded Opportunities
- Documenting PA Contribution to Healthcare
- Creating Progressive Work Environments for PAs
- Advancing PA Recognition and Understanding
- Improving AAPA Technology and Business Processes

Critical Competencies for Success

The following areas have been defined as critical competencies for the AAPA CEO:

Strategic Thinking

Strategic, visionary, and innovative leader, who can effectively engage with all stakeholders in order to position the organization and the PA profession for success now and in the future.

- Helps the organization define its collective vision and strategic direction. Offers advice, counsel and strategies.
- Leads organization development and continually revisits its strategic plan, reviews underlying assumptions, develops mid-course corrections as appropriate.
- Models and cultivates continuous strategic thinking, learning, and development.
- Addresses and manages change whether planned or unexpected at a strategic level.
- Relates to individuals with a high level of emotional intelligence.

Advocacy

Demonstrated ability to serve as an effective and visible advocacy champion.

- Represents AAPA with elected and appointed officials, at hearings, and at formal functions.
- Has extensive experience in leading and promoting the organization's advocacy initiatives and legislative agenda.
- Develops relationships with local, regional, and national key stakeholders and constituencies.
- Skilled in the art of persuasion and negotiation.
- Compelling public speaker.

Leadership

- **Vision**—Thinks in big-picture terms and articulates that broad perspective with others to help create a common purpose that mobilizes people and coordinates their efforts.
- **Trust and Integrity**—Supports a culture of candor and transparency. Acts by deeply held principles, professionally, ethically, and morally; has a strong sense of right and wrong, an understanding that good ethics are good business; and functions as a role model.
- **Participation and Community**—Inspires staff to contribute their expertise, effort, and enthusiasm to create a high-performing, positive, team environment. Generates mutual commitment that inspires highest performance from those who work with them. Encourages others to support one another and function as a team.
- **Learning**—Has self-awareness, understands their own strengths and shortcomings, promotes creativity and innovation, encourages people to refresh their skills and renew their commitment

and enthusiasm. Takes initiative to stay current in appropriate areas including association management.

- **Diversity**—Actively encourages and cultivates and supports an organizational culture that values diversity and mutual respect.
- **Creativity**—Effectively leverages internal talent by recognizing individual strengths, while identifying potential weaknesses in an effort to foster a supportive work environment that encourages a growth mindset.
- **Efficiency**—Invests in technologies or practices that improve productivity of staff and volunteers.
- **Credibility**—Is recognized as an effective leader by staff, AAPA leaders and members, leaders at related associations, and professional peers. Reflects the organization's values.

Management

Oversees all operations and business activities to ensure they produce the desired results and are consistent with the overall strategy and mission.

Planning:

- Assists the Board/Board Committees in developing, refining, and implementing a sustainable annual and long-term/strategic planning model and developing and refining a strategic/long-term plan.
- Assists the Board/Board Committees in developing an annual plan/program of work with complementary budget that supports the strategic plan and proves to be effective once implemented.
- Tracks status of plans; recognizes when plans are off track; knows when to and can regroup effectively to accomplish goals despite unforeseen obstacles and/or provides timely recommendations to the Board/Board Committees for changes in approach.
- Assists the Board/Board Committees in developing resources to support the implementation of the strategic plan.

Organization:

- Manages time and resources effectively to accomplish multiple objectives simultaneously.
- Delegates tasks effectively.
- Manages risk effectively both at the tactical and strategic level to ensure there is minimal adverse impact on the organization.
- Exceptional ability to manage multiple competing priorities.

Implementing & Initiating:

- Maintains focus on defined objectives; has good understanding and knowledge of projects underway, schedules, and progress made.
- Anticipates problems and takes corrective action to keep projects on track.
- Sets high standards for organization, staff, and self; work produced reflects excellent results within established deadlines and budgets.

- Anticipates and plans ahead for changes as appropriate when unexpected issues arise, and course corrects as necessary. Supports/carries out decisions made by the Board/Board Committees.
- Assumes responsibility for own actions; accepts challenges and takes appropriate risks.
- Assists the Board/Board Committees to set appropriate performance outcomes and metrics for the strategic and annual plans and program of work.
- Establishes and effectively communicates milestones to ensure projects and initiatives remain on track.
- Stays within scope of authority as defined/expected by the Board.
- Makes sound decisions on known facts; takes responsibility for decisions. Rapidly recognizes key factors in decision making and is not distracted by irrelevant data.

Entrepreneurship:

- Fosters a culture of innovation within the organization. Continuously seeks new ways, methods, and streamlined approaches to producing results.
- Looks for opportunities for the organization to expand its influence and/or market; proactively brings these to the attention of the Board/Board Committees for review.
- Encourages the evaluation of new technologies to ensure the organization is keeping pace with the market and best able to respond to PA needs and advance AAPA's mission.

Financial management:

Strong, relevant business judgment and aptitude. Ability to develop financial plans and manage resources. Ability to analyze and interpret financial data.

- Assures financial transactions are managed according to generally accepted accounting principles, as evidenced by independent audits.
- Exhibits appropriate understanding of tax laws and regulations that apply to nonprofit organizations; promptly recognizes when expert advice is needed and obtains it to ensure compliance.
- Prepares a realistic annual and attainable budget for the organization for review and approval by the Board; understands specific budget items; can articulate the rationale for costs and ensures staff can provide detail when appropriate.
- Adheres to annual budget with reasonable degree of accuracy; advises Board of unexpected deviations as learned; recommends adjustments with logical rationale and creativity.
- Understands the difference between the annual budget and cash flow; plans expenditures and manages income stream to maximize cash availability; advises Board when unexpected situations occur; presents effective plans for management of cash flow.
- Acts within authority delegated by the Board in financial matters.
- Identifies, reviews, and recommends cost-saving alternatives to Board; proposes adjustments in fees as necessary.
- Assists Board/Board Committees in developing and maintaining appropriate reserves and reserve policies.

- Assists Board/Board Committees in developing and maintaining appropriate investment policies, involving experts as appropriate; implements investment policy.
- Knowledge of contracting, negotiating, and change management. Skill in examining and re-engineering operations and procedures.
- Strong business development background with a demonstrated track record of identifying and securing funding/revenue sources.

Board Relations

- Supports and participates in the Board's knowledge-based decision-making process.
- Promotes and reinforces AAPA accomplishments to board & membership
- Envisions changes in organizational functioning and communicates changes to Board as appropriate.
- Implements policies as determined by the Board.
- Keeps President/Executive Committee informed of relevant and important matters in a timely way; demonstrates willingness to convey negative information; provides succinct information with appropriate detail.
- Provides useful guidance/advice to assist the President/Executive Committee in making appropriate decisions.
- Supports and implements decisions made by President/Executive Committee.
- Acts as an effective liaison with the Board/Board Committees; tactfully enters discussion to voice concerns, clarify issues, and presents ideas.
- Diplomatically assists Board in considering potential officers, committee chairs, and other representatives in best interests of organization.

People Competencies

Proficient in developing and maintaining relationships. Proven track record of consensus and team building using collaborative methods while encouraging diversity of thought. Strong management skills and ability to attract, develop and retain top talent. Strong leadership skills with the ability to inspire people to action that drive results.

Staff:

- Selects best candidates for key staff positions; interviews, evaluates, and selects individuals for proper fit with organization, management philosophy, and ability to integrate with team approach.
- Establishes effective standards related to duties and responsibilities of staff, including remote staff.
- Regularly assesses the performance of direct reports and ensures other staff are periodically evaluated in a job-related manner consistent with job descriptions, performance outcomes as well as strategic and annual plans.
- Recommends and establishes effective compensation plans and competitive benefit plans using appropriate salary surveys.

- Ensures ongoing training and professional development of staff members.

Communication

- Understands public relations and media relations principles, practices, strategies, and tactics.
- Listens actively and engages in effective two-way communication.
- Prepares effective and timely written correspondence with the Board and public.
- Prepares and delivers effective presentations to the Board and other audiences.
- Builds a collaboration network using personal contacts, direct mail, special events, and foundation support.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

- Ten plus years of executive-level experience leading, managing and building teams and transforming an organization’s culture through a period of significant change.
- Strong knowledge of health care policy and the players who impact it.
- Specific knowledge of PA issues, or executive-level experience as a PA is a strong plus.
- Experience serving as a chief advocate and spokesperson for an industry or group on Capitol Hill and before the relevant federal agencies.
- An advanced degree in a relevant field a strong plus.

Compensation

A competitive compensation package will be offered to attract an outstanding candidate.

To apply, please send a cover letter and current résumé (Microsoft Word® format preferred) to AAPA@smartinsearch.com. The cover letter should outline how your experience fits the requirements of the position as this will be an important factor in considering your candidacy.

AAPA is an equal opportunity / affirmative action employer committed to inclusion and cultural diversity in the workplace. Employment selection and related decisions are made without regard to sex, race, color, age, disability, religion, national origin, sexual preference, genetic information, or any other protected class.

For more information, contact:

Sterling Martin Associates

1025 Connecticut Avenue | Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036

David S. Martin | Managing Partner

AAPA@smartinsearch.com

202-257-1627

Leigh Beal | VP of Executive Recruiting

AAPA@smartinsearch.com

347-804-4237