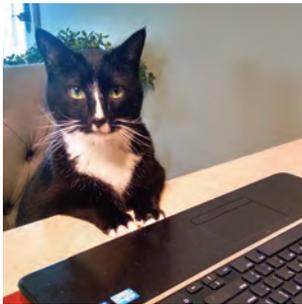


Letter From the President

Jenna Encheff, PT, PhD, CMPT, CERP

In these uncertain times, as things constantly change across the United States, and certainly within both human and animal physical therapy practices, it is important to spend our time and energy on the things we can influence and somewhat control. Like traditional human physical therapy clinics, those therapists who treat animals have had to adapt to the rapidly changing atmosphere in health care due to COVID-19. Implementing new business and practice strategies such as curb-side drop off of pets for treatment, use of telemedicine, limiting hours and number of clients in the building or barn, and social distancing in general have become new norms at this time for animal physical therapists and provides some semblance of control in these trying times. The human-animal bond is extremely important, especially in difficult times like these when people need all the support mechanisms they can get. A myriad of research studies has shown the benefits of pets on emotional, social, and mental health.¹⁻⁴ The change in our daily routines and isolation from others has put an emotional strain on many of us. However, social distancing and isolation from others has actually shined an even brighter light on the benefits of the company and interaction with our pets whether they be cats or



My cat, Sidney, “helping” me teach an online class.

dogs, rabbits or gerbils, horses or alpacas. Those of us who have pets do not need peer-reviewed scientific research studies to tell us the positive effects our animals have on us. Those of us who also treat animals additionally recognize the importance of helping to keep the animal healthy and sound not only for the animal’s sake, but of course, for the owner’s sake, as well—especially now.

REFERENCES

1. Wells DL. The effects of animals on human health and well-being. *J Soc Issue.* 2009;65(3): 523-543.
2. Barker S, Wolen A. The benefits of human-companion animal interaction: A review. *J Vet Med Ed.* 2008;35(4):487-495.
3. Brooks HL, Rushton K, Lovell K, et al. The power of support from companion animals for people living with mental health problems: a systematic review and narrative synthesis of the evidence. *BMC Psychol.* 2018;18(1):31-37.
4. Olenick M, Flowers M, Lynne R, Munecas T, Kelava S. Taking the reins: US veterans and equine assisted activities and therapies. *J Trauma Treat.* 2018;7:3. doi: 10.4172/2167-1222.1000427.

Stepping Down

At this time, I would like to inform the APTSIG members that I have chosen to step down from my role as President of the APTSIG. I have taken on a larger role at work that does not allow me to feel as if I can give my all to the APTSIG due to time con-

straints. I have enjoyed my time as President and do plan to stay involved in the SIG as time allows. It is truly my wish that someday physical therapists be fully recognized as the provider of choice in rehabilitation for animals, and I am sure the APTSIG will continue to support and progress our profession in this realm.

Thank you - Jenna!

New APTSIG Officers

I would like to introduce you to the following physical therapists who were elected to positions within the APTSIG and who began their terms in February.

Vice President: Francisco Maia, PT, DPT, CCRT, is the owner of TheK9PT, a canine rehabilitation business in Chicago. He graduated with his DPT from the University of Pittsburgh in 2012 and finished his certification as a canine rehabilitation therapist through the Canine Rehabilitation Institute in 2015. He has been a member of the APTA since 2009 and member of the APTSIG since 2015. He also serves as an Assembly Representative for the Illinois Physical Therapy Association and has been working closely with them to advance legislation regarding animal rehabilitation in Illinois. Francisco will be stepping into the role of President.

Nominating Committee Members:

Nicole Windsor, PT, DPT, FAAOMPT, CERP, specializes in orthopedics and manual therapy for humans and is a Certified Equine Rehabilitation Practitioner via the University of Tennessee (2017). She attained her Master’s in Physical Therapy via Wichita State University in 2004 and in 2009 attained a Fellowship in manual therapy (FAAOMPT) via The Manual Therapy Institute, while concurrently pursuing a tDPT with the University of Kansas. Most recently, she owned Cornerstone Physical Therapy, an outpatient private practice, in the Kansas City area. She was also an Assistant Professor at the University of Saint Mary in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program and is currently at the University of Kentucky working on a PhD in Rehabilitation Sciences which will assist her in returning to a role in DPT education.

Marilyn Miller, PT, PhD, GCS, is an Associate Professor in the DPT program at the California campus of University of St. Augustine. She started her career as a student in the US Army PT program; and left active duty for civilian practice working in multiple states to include New Mexico, Alabama, Arkansas, Hawaii, and now California. She earned a Master’s degree in Gerontology at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and a PhD in Higher, Professional and Adult Education at the University of Southern California. Dr. Miller has been active in multiple APTA sections, State Chapter offices & committees, as well as APTA/CAPTE positions.

Over the next few months, our new officers will continue to receive orientation to their new roles and participate in APTSIG tasks, activities, and duties. We thank them for their service!

We are actively looking for members to serve as state liaisons for the APTSIG. Each month we receive several emails asking about state specific rules and regulations related to animal physical therapy and we need members from each state who are knowledgeable in their state PT and Veterinary Practice Acts to whom we can refer these inquiries. If interested, please contact Francisco at fmaia@orthopt.org.