

Brief CV for WPA Zonal Representative Application (Zone 2)

Rick Peter Fritz Wolthusen, MD, MPP is a psychiatrist, clinician-educator, and global mental health practitioner whose work bridges severe mental illness care, education, public policy, and systems-level capacity building. He is a clinician in the Psychotic Disorders Division at McLean Hospital, specializing in psychosis, bipolar disorder, and catatonia, with a broader clinical focus on serious mental illness, and holds academic affiliations with Harvard Medical School, USA, and the University of Ghana, Ghana. Trained in medicine at TU Dresden in Germany and in psychiatry at Duke University Medical Center in the United States, his professional trajectory includes more than fifteen years of global mental health work across Germany, the United States, Ghana, Kenya, Australia, and New Zealand. He brings a complementary systems perspective to psychiatry through a Master in Public Policy (MPP) from the Harvard Kennedy School, contributing to his sustained interest in mental health implementation and institutional collaboration.

His clinical work informs research and educational interests in global mental health, cultural psychiatry, and systems of care, particularly around context-responsive models for mental illness. A defining feature of his profile is the design and implementation of innovative models that strengthen community-based mental health ecosystems and expand training, service, and research capacity for community-centered care. Examples include the Brain Spirit Desk in Ghana, a design-based initiative integrating spiritually grounded support, task-sharing, workforce development, and cross-sector collaboration; Home of Brains, a Center for Mental Health in Ghana and Kenya advancing prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, advocacy, and research; and the Kisumu County Suicide Prevention Strategy in Kenya, which he led in design and co-implemented with governments, universities, and health systems.

His work in systems and innovation is complemented by a commitment to sustainable organizational structures. He founded and continues to co-lead the award-winning German NGO On The Move e.V., which has sustained impactful programs for more than a decade through multiple funding streams, including multi-year, competitively awarded European Union support. He also co-leads a multinational Mental Health Venture Incubator spanning Ghana, Kenya, and Germany that strengthens locally driven projects and operationalizes mutual capacity building as a partnership framework for mental health innovation, implementation, and shared leadership.

Education and mentorship constitute additional pillars of his work. Within the Community and Global Psychiatry Program at MGH/McLean, he mentors students, residents, fellows, and early career psychiatrists across multiple institutions and international settings, pairing educational support with concrete skill building and professional visibility; mentees have presented at (inter)national conferences, developed research portfolios, published peer-reviewed work, and advanced community-engaged projects. He has designed and implemented international exchange models linking Ghana, Germany, and Kenya, as well as the first-ever WPA-American institutional exchange at McLean Hospital, supporting multidirectional workforce development and shared learning across training levels and regions.

Research and dissemination activities are closely tied to capacity building and international collaboration. He is an invited speaker and educator in Europe, North America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America, and his work has received visibility through peer-reviewed publications, educational outputs, media features, and a documentary film, as well as

recognition through the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, the nation's highest civilian honor.

Service and governance reflect a commitment to bridging psychiatry across institutions and regions. Within the American Psychiatric Association (APA), he was selected as an APA Foundation Public Psychiatry Fellow, serving as a fellow member and later full member of the Council on International Psychiatry and Global Health. He also serves as Council Liaison to the Council on Advocacy and Government Relations and is a member of the APA's Global Mental Health Caucus and Global Mental Health Curriculum Design Workgroup. Within the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), he has served as Early Career Psychiatrists (ECP) Section Zonal Representative (Zones 1 - 3) and Secretary. During his term, membership and active engagement from Zones 1 - 3 increased markedly, reflected in participation in conferences, presentations, and Section activities. He has co-organized scientific programming, including ECP activities at the annual World Congresses of Psychiatry and the dedicated ECP track for the WPA Regional Congress in Quito, Ecuador. He is also a member of the WPA Education Section. He was awarded a WPA Fellowship in 2024, nominated by the APA, and was the only U.S. recipient in recent years.

His language competencies include native German, advanced English (C1–C2), intermediate French (B1–B2), and introductory Spanish (A1–A2). He maintains professional networks across national psychiatric associations in Germany, Kenya, Ghana, and the broader European and Australasian regions, and through his WPA roles has developed connections to psychiatric membership organizations across multiple WPA zones, reinforcing a practical understanding of governance cultures, training pathways, and workforce realities beyond the United States. He is particularly interested in co-shaping the APA's international engagement and in advancing a coordinated strategy for how APA participates in global psychiatry, in service of clinicians, trainees, and patients through equitable collaboration.