

Candidate Statement for WPA Zonal Representative Application (Zone 2)

Psychiatry is increasingly shaped by scientific, clinical, and educational developments that cross national boundaries. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) has recognized this shift through its participation in coalitions such as the Prague Agreement and the Agreement of the Americas, and through strategic priorities articulated in the Psychiatry 2030 framework. These developments reflect a broader truth: global collaboration strengthens psychiatry, benefits patients, and expands opportunities for clinicians and trainees.

My path into international psychiatric collaboration began through the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), which I sought out independently early in my career. I have remained active within WPA structures while also being an engaged member of APA for even longer. Having participated in both contexts, I believe there is opportunity to strengthen collaboration between the two organizations, not in a competitive way but in a complementary and mutually beneficial way, and not only at the level of leadership but also at the level of membership. Increasing APA members' engagement with WPA resources, including scientific meetings, educational offerings, research networks, and collaborative initiatives, aligns with APA's commitment to member success and workforce development. At the same time, WPA colleagues often look to APA for educational partnership and organizational expertise. Active in psychiatric associations in Ghana and Kenya, and connected with German and Australasian psychiatry, I bring familiarity with organizational cultures and networks that support collaboration.

The role of Zonal Representative is ever changing depending on the needs of our time. If elected, my aim would be to give the role a constructive and service-oriented shape that advances APA's strategic priorities and is grounded in sustainable mutual capacity building. I would approach the position in an ambassadorial spirit that represents APA's institutional interests within WPA governance, supports bidirectional collaboration, and helps translate shared ideas into concrete activities that benefit members.

There are WPA initiatives that align with the Psychiatry 2030 framework and provide structured avenues for collaboration. These include expanding existent educational exchange programs that support workforce development; establishing the first Collaborating Centers in Zone 2 that serve as institutional homes for mental health innovation; opportunities to highlight international perspectives through APA publications and communication channels; the possibility of one Regional Congress in North America that could increase participation and visibility. Advancing such activities would strengthen medical leadership, support member success, and enhance organizational strength through relationship-building and cooperation.

This role also offers an opportunity to help APA articulate a proactive approach to international engagement. While APA is a global leader, it does not currently have an explicit international engagement strategy. As a member of the APA Council on International Psychiatry and Global Health, I am well positioned to contribute to such a strategy and to ensure it remains pragmatic, sustainable, and aligned with APA's mission and with the realities of global psychiatric collaboration.

If elected, my goal would be to ensure that Zone 2 remains a constructive, visible, and forward-looking contributor within WPA governance and that the APA engages in and learns from global psychiatry in ways that benefit clinicians, trainees, and patients.