

THE GRAHAM SESSIONS



**APTA Centennial Center
3030 Potomac Avenue
Alexandria, VA
*Diamonds Are Made Under Pressure***

Thursday, January 22, 2026

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Welcome Reception	Murphy's Irish Pub 713 King Street, Alexandria VA
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Friday, January 23, 2026

7:00 AM – 8:00 AM	Registration & Breakfast (on-site at APTA Headquarters)
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8:00 AM - 8:15 AM	Welcome Remarks
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A word from our Reception Sponsor - Athelas

8:20 AM – 9:45 AM	Primary Care PT: Skills, Risks, and Opportunities for the Next Era of Practice
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Primary care physical therapy is an emerging area of practice gaining momentum through new clinical models and legislative advances. From Utah's statewide legislation to PT urgent care, the military model, and new specialty certifications, physical therapists are increasingly being recognized or asked to consider stepping into primary care roles. With APTA's September 2025 "Practice Advisory: Primary Care Physical Therapy" offering new guidance, this session will explore the skills required for primary care PT, the opportunities and risks of expanded roles such as imaging and prescribing, and the implications for malpractice and liability. Attendees will engage in an open Q and A to consider whether primary care PT is practical, sustainable, and desirable for the future of the profession.

Panelists: Susan Appling, PT, DPT, PhD, Ashley Cassel, PT, DPT, Samantha (Sam) Schmidt, PT, MPT, Colonel Jason Silvernail, PT, DPT, DSc

9:45 AM - 10:00 AM

What I Believe by Josh D'Angelo

10:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Break

SaRa Health Catalyst Statement

10:20 AM - 11:45 AM

Building Collective Bargaining Power: What PT Can Learn From Dentistry and Healthcare Mega Groups

Despite strong evidence supporting the value of physical therapy, reimbursement for PT services continues to decline. This session explores how collective negotiation power drives meaningful payment reform. It will examine how large, unified networks of private physical therapy practices, modeled after successful consolidation strategies in fields like hospital medicine and anesthesiology, could strengthen the profession's leverage with third-party payers, protect smaller clinics, and stabilize reimbursement. The session will also draw lessons from the dental industry, where coordinated contracting, group practices, and strategic consolidation have already reshaped payer relationships and improved financial sustainability.

Panelists: Monique Caruth, PT, DPT, Jeff Sallade, DPT, Ken Guzzardo, PT, DPT, Laurence Benz, PT, DPT, FAPTA

11:45 AM – 1:15 PM

Lunch

Lincoln Reimbursements Catalyst Statement

1:20 PM - 2:45 PM

Civil Discourse and a Community of Belonging in a Fractured Society

In an era marked by divergent beliefs and increasing polarization, physical therapists and other healthcare providers play a vital role in ensuring that every community has meaningful access to high-quality care. Meeting this responsibility requires clear-eyed assessment, a community of belonging, and the ability to engage across differences with respect and purpose. This session will examine how the Association supports civil discourse while advancing a shared mission, and how providers can actively foster trust, connection, and better health outcomes within their communities. Participants will explore practical strategies to navigate challenging interactions, build inclusive environments, and uphold the values that strengthen both the profession and the patients they serve.

Panelists: TBD

In order to encourage genuine conversation in a safe environment, the content of Graham Sessions discussions stays within the room, and all participants agree to keep the conversation closed.

Photos and video recordings of the sessions are prohibited without the express permission of the PPS staff. Social media posts regarding any of the content of the sessions are also prohibited.

Leave your laptops behind, turn off those phones, and unplug and enjoy the conversation!

2:45 PM – 3:00 PM ***What I Believe by Rupal Patel***

3:00 PM - 3:15 PM **Break**

3:15 PM – 4:45PM **“Gentelligence” - Generational Leadership in the PT Profession**

The generational "gap" in Physical Therapy can feel more like a chasm, fueled by fundamental disagreements over work-life balance, personal and professional values, and loyalty. This tension is crushing morale and threatening our profession's future. In this interactive session, we're moving beyond pleasantries to dissect the friction between the "work hard" mentality and the "work smart" approach. Through open conversation, we will unearth unconventional strategies to diagnose conflict, boost trust, redefine expectations, and lead across the unique skills and challenges each age group, generation, and demographic brings to the workplace. This session is about facing the collision head-on with empathetic leadership to build a truly resilient and competitive profession.

Panelists: Alison Hartman, PT, DPT and Lisa Flexner, PT, DPT

4:45 PM – 5:00 PM ***What I Believe by Megan Donaldson***

5:30 PM – ON **Tentative Networking Dinners & Social**

Saturday, January 24, 2026

7:00 AM – 8:00 AM **Breakfast**

8:00 AM - 8:15 AM Welcome Back!

Prompt Catalyst Statement

8:15 AM - 8:30 AM ***What I Believe By Robbie Leonard, PT, DPT***

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8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Academic Financing After the Big Beautiful Bill: Implications for our Future

DPT education costs have climbed for decades, and new federal loan limits will soon cap graduate borrowing at \$100,000 - far below the price tag of many PT programs. Meanwhile, “professional programs” like medicine and law retain a \$200,000 cap, raising questions about whether PT should push for similar classification or consider alternative solutions entirely. This panel brings together program leaders, financial experts, and lenders to unpack how institutions are adapting, what this means for access and equity, and how it could reshape the PT pipeline. Is this policy shift a much-needed correction to the debt-to-income imbalance, or a change that could squeeze programs and limit entry into the profession? Join us to explore the trade-offs and what sustainable PT education might look like next.

Panelists: Sharon Dunn, PT, PhD, Rich Shields, PT, PhD, FAPTA, Tony Delitto, PT, PhD, FAPTA, Mary Blackington, PT, EdD, and Skye Donovan, PT, PhD

10:00 AM -10:15 AM

What I Believe #5

10:15 AM – 10:30 AM

Break

Enovis Catalyst Statement

10:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Open Discussion/Blind Spot

11:30 AM

Adjourn

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