

2026-2027 Candidate Statements

Each of the 2026-2027 candidates running for a Board of Directors or Leadership position prepared a candidate statement to help introduce themselves to the AAOA membership.

Dole Baker, MD, FAAOA | PRESIDENT-ELECT



I am very honored to be nominated to serve as President-Elect of the AAOA. I have been actively involved with the AAOA for many years, and I believe this is an especially exciting and important time for our organization.

I have been an active Otolaryngic Allergist and Fellow of the AAOA for more than 20 years. Since 2007, I have had the privilege of serving our

membership in a wide variety of roles, including Treasurer, Secretary, Socioeconomic Chair, Board Member at Large, and as a member of the Finance, Patient and Professional Relations, and Audit Committees, as well as representing the AAOA at the AAO-HNS Board of Governors. These experiences have given me a broad perspective on our organization, the changing needs of our members, and an appreciation for the opportunities ahead for the AAOA.

As President-Elect, I will work closely with our current leadership, Board, and staff to ensure that the AAOA continues to provide exceptional value to our members and remains an essential resource for them and their practices. We will continue to improve and enhance both our in-person and virtual educational offerings, ensuring that our education remains relevant, accessible, practical, and responsive to the changing needs of our members.

I am particularly proud of the continued growth and success of our affinity program. This initiative has brought significant advantages and tangible value to our members and their practices while also providing the AAOA with new and innovative sources of financial support. This has helped us expand membership benefits while maintaining our strong financial position and keeping dues low and stable. We will continue to build upon this success and look for new ways to provide meaningful benefits that extend beyond our traditional educational mission.

The AAOA has a long history of providing outstanding education and supporting otolaryngologists who incorporate allergy into their practices. We will continue that commitment to our members while building upon and improving our organization. As we move forward, we will ensure that the AAOA remains a strong voice and an essential

resource for practicing otolaryngologists.

It has been a privilege to serve the AAOA in many capacities over the years. I would be honored to continue that service as President-Elect.

Christine DeMason, MD, FAAOA | SECRETARY

It is an honor to be considered for the position of Secretary of the American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy. The AAOA has played an important role in my professional development, and I am excited by the opportunity to continue to give back to an organization that has strengthened my clinical practice, expanded my professional community, and provided meaningful opportunities to educate and collaborate with colleagues across the country.



My involvement with the AAOA has grown steadily over the past several years. I currently serve as the chair of the Socioeconomic Committee and as a member on the Education Program, Membership Task Force, and Patient and Professional Relations Committees. These experiences have given me a broad understanding of the organization and, more importantly, the opportunity to work with and learn from many of its dedicated members and leaders.

If elected, I would work to strengthen communication and engagement across the membership while supporting the AAOA's continued growth and educational mission. I am particularly interested in expanding opportunities for members at different career stages to become involved in the organization, supporting the practical needs of otolaryngologists, and ensuring that the AAOA continues to demonstrate the value of otolaryngic allergy within the broader specialty.

Most importantly, I value the relationships and sense of community I have developed through the AAOA. AAOA succeeds because its members are willing to share their expertise, mentor colleagues, and invest their time in advancing our field. It would be a privilege to serve those members as Secretary and to help position the AAOA for continued growth, innovation, and success.

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Haidy Marzouk, MD, MBA, FAAOA | *TREASURER*



It is an honor to be nominated to serve as Treasurer of the American Academy of Otolaryngologic Allergy. Since becoming a Fellow of the AAOA in 2018, I have been fortunate to serve the Academy in a number of roles, including Education Assessment, Annual Meeting Planning, Chair of the Patient and Professional Relations Committee, and most recently as Secretary. These

experiences have given me a deeper appreciation for the people, programs, and resources that allow our Academy to fulfill its mission and provide value to its members.

Otolaryngologic allergy remains an important part of my clinical practice, and I am committed to ensuring that it continues to thrive within our specialty and in the education of future otolaryngologists. I also believe that maintaining a strong Academy requires thoughtful stewardship of its resources and a willingness to adapt as the needs of our members and the healthcare environment evolve.

My MBA training, together with my experience in physician leadership, service-line development, operational planning, and financial stewardship, have reinforced the importance of aligning an organization's resources with its mission and long-term priorities. As Treasurer, I would bring that perspective to the AAOA while working collaboratively with our leadership, Board, committees, and staff.

I hope to build upon the work of those who have served before me by supporting the continued financial strength of the Academy, identifying opportunities for sustainable growth, and ensuring that our resources support the education, advocacy, and member services that make the AAOA valuable to our specialty.

It has been a privilege to serve the AAOA, and I would be honored to continue that service as Treasurer.

Robert Stachler, MD, FAAOA | *COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION*



I am honored to be nominated this year for the position of Educational Coordinator. This will be my sixth year in the position. We have accomplished a great deal in the last five years. We have developed a large pool of faculty that gives us many options for fresh and newer content in the future. We have had 5 successful years of hybrid presentations and meetings (Basic, Advanced/Explorers, and Annual). Our meetings have been well attended and received by the membership. I must thank the wonderful Educational Committee, the annual meeting planning committee, and all the staff: Jami, Kate, Marina, Melissa, and Evan that have been pivotal in our success thus far.

We have revamped the Advanced and Annual Meeting content, to prevent overlap of material. We are rotating the Advanced content on a 3-to-4-year cycle. We have renamed the Advanced Course and are calling it the Explorers Course, to reflect a new Format and innovative design. I would like to thank Keith Sale and the education committee for their help in organizing the meetings, content, and educational programming.

We also are still in the mist of our review by the ACCME, which we have been working on diligently. We had a Teaching Retreat / Workshops for the Educational Committee and faculty in Chicago last year. We learned about how to better engage our learners and to teach more effectively in the future. There were four key stages of learning with implementation as the key end-component in the learning. We have been successful in inserting these sessions into our Meetings.

We have invited residents from every program to be involved in our society. The residents have been incorporated and will continued to be included in our educational programming. Resident engagement and membership are crucial for injecting fresh ideas and perspective into our society. As you can see, with all these irons in the fire, there is clearly more that I am interested in accomplishing soon. I pledge to continue to provide newer and innovative educational experiences to our members. I will continue to re-evaluate and modify our educational content to ensure it is fresh and cutting edge. I thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve you as your Educational Coordinator for the 2026-2027 educational year.

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Christopher Brook, MD, FAAOA |
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT



It is an honor to be nominated again to serve as the Director of Educational Assessment, a position which I have held for the last seven years. I am an academic rhinologist in practice at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, Massachusetts. Allergy testing and management are integral to my practice in rhinology and

serve as both a clinical and academic interest for me. I have enjoyed the opportunity of being part of the Basic Course and Annual Meeting faculty for the last 8 years and look forward to continuing to do so.

Farrah Siddiqui, MD, FAAOA |
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

I am honored to be nominated for Director of Educational Programs, and I remain deeply committed to advancing the AAOA's educational mission. I am grateful to the dedicated faculty, Fellows, members, and staff who make our programs possible through their work on committees, task forces, and courses.



Allergy is and will remain an integral part of my practice and education platform. As Director of Educational Programs, I look forward to building and enhancing our educational efforts—expanding creative formats, strengthening online resources, and increasing accessibility across live, virtual, and hybrid platforms. My experience as an AAOA and ABOHNS item writer and oral examiner reinforces my belief in the AAOA's vital role in educating residents, Fellows, and practicing otolaryngic allergists. By offering flexible and engaging options, we will continue to reach more learners and support them in advancing our field

Scott Fortune, MD, FAAOA |
PATIENT & PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS CHAIR

Every year the value of membership in the AAOA has increased for me. After passing the Fellow Exam in 2004, I attended many AAOA courses and meetings over the years, became Basic Course Faculty member in 2022, was elected to the Board as an At-Large member in 2024, and in 2025 was elected to chair the Patients and Physicians Committee.



I am grateful to the membership and Board of Directors of the AAOA for entrusting me last year with the opportunity to serve as Chair of the Patient and Physician Relations (PPR) Committee. It has been a privilege to lead this committee and work with a dedicated group of members committed to providing meaningful, engaging, and practical educational content for both physicians and patients.

Over the past year, we have built on the strong foundation of the PPR Committee and successfully advanced several of the initiatives outlined in my previous candidate statement. These accomplishments include the introduction of current Otolaryngic Allergy literature reviews, monthly questions featured in the AAOA newsletter and on the website, continuation of our popular YouTube educational series, and the revitalization of the AAOA podcast.

We have also expanded the committee by incorporating resident members, creating opportunities for the next generation of otolaryngologists to become more involved with the Academy and contribute to our educational mission. In addition, we are developing new Problem-Based Learning Modules designed to provide practical, case-based education for residents, young physicians, and experienced practitioners alike.

If re-elected, I look forward to building on this momentum. Our goal will remain to develop relevant, accessible, and engaging educational content that strengthens the value of AAOA membership and serves both our physician and patient communities. I also want to continue expanding opportunities for members at every stage of their careers to participate in the Academy and contribute their perspectives and expertise. As I stated last year, I remain committed to listening to the membership and Board of Directors. I welcome your ideas and suggestions for how the PPR Committee can continue to evolve

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and enhance the educational resources and value that the AAOA provides.

I would be honored to have the opportunity to continue serving as Chair of the Patient and Physician Relations Committee and to build on the progress we have made together.

Melissa Hertler, MD, FAAOA | *SOCIOECONOMIC CHAIR*



It's an honor to accept the nomination for the AAOA Socioeconomic Committee chair, to succeed Christine DeMason and many others who, with the AAOA staff, have successfully built a solid foundation of committee activities that tangibly benefit the membership of the AAOA and beyond. I am a general otolaryngologist in the Milwaukee area, with experience introducing and maintaining otolaryngic

allergy in both private and hospital-employed practices, and appreciate the associated challenges. As a member of the AAOA since training, and fellow since 2013, I have served in various capacities, including as an at-large member of the Board of Directors, on various committees and project-specific task forces, as a fellowship examiner, a presenter at educational courses and the annual meeting, and currently as a member of the Socioeconomic Committee, Audit Committee, and the AAOA's RUC advisor.

The Socioeconomic Committee serves its members by keeping them informed of current affairs and policy changes that impact our practices, for example, changes in CMS fee schedules or definitions, and regulatory requirements such as USP 797. In collaboration with other AAOA committees, the Socioeconomic Committee develops and continually updates valuable membership resources, such as the Clinical Care Statements. The Socioeconomic Committee also serves as a liaison with other medical societies, coordinating ongoing advocacy activities. I pledge to continue to focus the efforts of the Socioeconomic Committee to the best benefit of the membership in any current and upcoming issues, and am grateful for the opportunity to serve in this role.

Meha Fox, MD, FAAOA | *BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE*

I am an academic rhinologist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, TX. I also serve our veterans at the Michael E DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center.



I completed residency training at Baylor and fellowship training at the University of Kansas. I first came to an AAOA course as a resident. The things that impressed me about this organization since then have only grown. I have been a fellow of the AAOA since 2023 and have taught at both the AAOA Basic and Explorers' courses several times and served on the AAOA Foundation Grant Review Committee.

If I had to pick a word to describe the AAOA, it would be "agile." I have watched the organization take a deep dive into its members' needs and adapt the educational and outreach programs in innovative and member-focused methods. It is an organization that effectively addresses the concerns of private practice, employed, and academic otolaryngic allergists. It is an organization of which I am proud to be a member.

I was honored to be nominated for the position of member at large. If elected, I would connect with members and bring their needs to the board. Based on current knowledge, I would work on creating more resources for the members that are available at their fingertips for clinical care, billing, and training. I would work with staff and leadership to increase trainee and early career physician engagement.

Bryan Leatherman, MD, FAAOA | *BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE*

I am grateful for the opportunity to earn your vote for Board Member at Large of the AAOA. After beginning my career with two years in academic medicine, I have spent the past 22 years in private practice otolaryngology.



My relationship with the AAOA began during my second year of residency, and over the years I have been fortunate to serve the Academy in many roles. In addition to teaching at AAOA courses for the past 23 years, I have served several terms as Socioeconomic Chair, as Secretary, and previously as a Board Member at Large. I have also participated in and chaired numerous committees and task

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forces.

More recently, much of my effort has focused on increasing resident involvement in the AAOA and expanding educational opportunities for the next generation of otolaryngologists. With the dedicated efforts of many others over several years, we have grown resident membership from just 41 members a few years ago to approximately 1,500 today. We have also established the FASTeR (Focused Allergy Skills Training for Residents) program. With generous support from industry and the AAOA, FASTeR allows residents to attend our meetings at no cost and receive focused, accelerated allergy training designed to better prepare them to incorporate allergy care into their practices after residency. In the past year alone, we have provided this training to 128 residents, with another 50 residents scheduled to participate at our upcoming annual meeting.

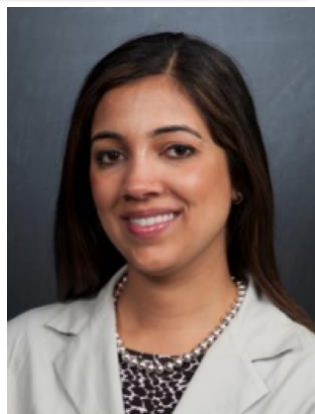
If entrusted with another opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors as an at-large member, I will continue working to engage and educate our residents—who represent the future of both our organization and our specialty—while also helping guide the AAOA in its broader mission of meeting the educational and advocacy needs of our membership. As the practice of medicine continues to evolve, I believe it is increasingly important that the AAOA remain a strong voice for otolaryngologists and ensure that our members have the knowledge, resources, and support necessary to provide comprehensive allergy care for their patients.

Throughout my many years of involvement with the AAOA, I have developed a deep appreciation for the value this organization provides to the otolaryngology community. Fulfilling the AAOA's mission requires a true team effort, and our membership is at the center of that team. We are fortunate to have knowledgeable and engaged members who continually challenge the Academy to perform at its best. The volunteers who serve on our committees and develop and deliver our educational programs are the backbone of the organization. Our talented and dedicated staff turn those ideas and efforts into reality. The AAOA leadership is entrusted by the voting membership with the responsibility of providing the oversight and direction necessary to keep the organization moving forward.

I would be honored to earn your vote and to once again have the opportunity to contribute my experience, energy, and commitment to this team as an AAOA Board Member at Large.

Mona Patadia, MD, FAAOA | BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE

It is an honor to be considered for the AAOA Board of Directors. The AAOA has been a professional home and a true community for me since 2010, and I am grateful for the many opportunities it has given me to learn, contribute, and grow.



Over the past 16 years, I have had the privilege of serving the organization in many capacities, including Board Member at Large, Education Committee member, AMA Junior Representative, Basic Course faculty, and Director of Educational Assessment. As Director of Educational Assessment, I helped lead the transition of the Fellows Examination to an online platform in 2018–2019—an important modernization that ultimately positioned the organization well during the COVID-19 pandemic.

My AAOA experience has profoundly shaped my practice as an academic rhinologist. It has strengthened my knowledge of allergy, immune evaluation, immunotherapy, USP 797, and national regulations, allowing me to provide comprehensive care to my patients.

After stepping back briefly to focus on my family during my children's adolescent years, I am excited to re-engage more deeply with the AAOA. I hope to bring the perspective of an academic rhinologist, educator, and long-standing member to help the organization continue to evolve. I am particularly interested in advancing education in otolaryngic allergy, rhinology, surgical and in-office procedures, and emerging systemic therapies while keeping our members engaged and prepared for the future.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to serve the AAOA in whatever capacity is most helpful. It would be a privilege to give back to an organization that has given me so much.

Mas Takashima, MD, FAAOA | BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE

It is an honor to be nominated for the position of Board Member at Large of the American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy. The AAOA has been an important part of my professional career for more than two decades, and I would welcome the opportunity to give back to an organization whose mission is increasingly important to our specialty.

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My involvement with the AAOA has included service on the Research Grant Committee, Fellowship Exam Committee, Public Relations Committee, and Position Statements and Clinical Practice Committee, as well as mentoring young

investigators through the Research in Otolaryngology & Allergy Development Program. I have also had the privilege of serving on the AAOA Foundation Board, currently as Treasurer, and on the Audit and Investment Committee. These experiences have given me a broad appreciation for the AAOA's educational mission, financial stewardship, and responsibility to provide meaningful value to its members.

Although I practice in an academic health system, Houston Methodist combines academic medicine with a highly business-minded and operationally focused culture. As Chair of the Department of Otolaryngology–Head & Neck Surgery, I am responsible not only for education and academics, but also for building sustainable clinical programs, improving efficiency, recruiting and retaining physicians and staff, navigating reimbursement and payer issues, and introducing new technologies responsibly. This perspective has helped me appreciate and bridge the priorities of both academic and private-practice otolaryngologists. I believe the AAOA provides its greatest value when its education, advocacy, and resources translate directly into better patient care and stronger practices for all of our members.

Education has been a major focus throughout my career. I served for more than a decade as a residency program director and developed a new ACGME-accredited Otolaryngology–Head & Neck Surgery residency program. If elected, one of my priorities would be to expand the AAOA's engagement with residents and ensure that otolaryngic allergy remains an important part of their education. Earlier exposure can improve patient care while cultivating the next generation of AAOA members and leaders. I would also bring the perspective of my current service on the Board of Directors of the American Board of Otolaryngology–Head & Neck Surgery, particularly regarding education, assessment, and the evolving competencies expected of our specialty.

Finally, my role as a department chair and clinical investigator has allowed me to develop strong relationships across the pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical device industries. I hope to leverage these relationships appropriately to broaden AAOA industry partnerships,

increase opportunities for unrestricted educational grants and meeting support, and diversify revenue while preserving the independence of our educational mission. Stronger external partnerships can expand member resources while minimizing the financial burden placed directly on individual members.

It would be a privilege to bring my experience in education, governance, financial stewardship, research, and organizational leadership to the AAOA Board. Most importantly, I would work to ensure that the AAOA remains responsive to its members, delivers tangible value to practicing otolaryngologists, and strengthens otolaryngic allergy for the next generation.

Wesley VanderArk, MD, FAAOA | AMA PHYSICIAN DELEGATE

It is again an honor to be nominated for the position of AMA delegate for the AAOA. I have been active with the AAOA since joining the AAOA as a resident in 1996. I have continued as an active member of the



association and have served in a number of different capacities on a number of committees, AMA alternate delegate and delegate, Secretary, and President of the organization.

Now most of my involvement is in advocacy efforts for the organization. Involvement with the AMA allows our organization to have a voice and effect change on Capitol Hill in an effort to protect and preserve the ability of our members to continue practicing Otolaryngic Allergy. Our AMA involvement in the past, while working with sister organizations, has been instrumental to maintain vial mixing reimbursement and also affect more favorable language with USP 797 revisions, as well as affecting policy on Capitol Hill that affects all aspects of Otolaryngology. I am grateful to have been a part of these efforts through the AAOA and the AMA which your membership in the AMA allows. If you are not an AMA member, I would certainly ask you to consider membership to keep that opportunity alive for the AAOA. I appreciate your support in this election.

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Alpen Patel, MD, FAAOA | AMA ALTERNATE DELEGATE

It is a great honor to be once again nominated for the AAOA AMA Alternate Delegate. I have been an active member of the AAOA since I joined as a resident member 25 years ago.

During this time, I have served in various capacities for the organization. I have participated in several AAOA Academic Workshops, instructed at the Annual Meeting as well as at the Basic & Advanced Courses, administered the Fellowship exam, represented this organization as well as AAO-HNS at the AMA, lectured at various AAOA Symposia and Courses, and served as Board Member-at Large, Socioeconomic Chair, & Treasurer as well as on the Research, Nominating, Corporate Development, Compensation, Finance, & Investment Committees. In addition, I had the privilege to serve as President of the AAOA. I am grateful for these opportunities, and I am fortunate to be part of such a successful organization. With your support, I would like to represent the AAOA membership to the best of my ability.



pandemic that facilitated outreach and the continued efforts to reduce the silos that tend to exist between specialties that care for our patients. Now is the time for us to continue to build bridges and share best practices as we continue to face the challenges of structural social inequities, an evolving pandemic, and physician burnout, to name a few.

I have practiced general otolaryngology and otolaryngic allergy in the community hospital setting and have more than a decade of experience in quality and patient safety at the hospital executive level of three military hospitals including a medical center. This rich background gives me a perspective that appreciates the complexity of the care we deliver, the importance of effective communication and the management of change in an evolving healthcare setting.

Michelle Liu, MD, FAAOA | AUDIT COMMITTEE

I am honored to be nominated to serve on the Audit Committee of the American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy.

It has been an absolute pleasure to experience the AAOA first as a resident attending annual meetings and both the Basic and Advanced courses, then as a fellow and volunteer fellowship examiner and faculty member. Furthermore, my engagement with the outstanding AAOA leadership team has opened opportunities for me professionally and personally. I have specifically appreciated the innovative and inclusive approaches to education, mentorship (or FrENTorship) and practice development that recognize and appreciate the diverse communities that we serve as physicians in this country. I've enjoyed the evolution of virtual platforms during the CoVID

