

2026

Below are the complete profiles for candidates running in TMA's upcoming election. Elections will begin February 1 and end on February 28 at 5:00 pm CT. For additional information, please visit [tnmed.org/elections](https://tnmed.org/elections).

## PRESIDENT-ELECT



**Nominee:** George R. "Trey" Lee, III, MD, MS, MBA

**City:** Nashville

**CMS:** Nashville Academy of Medicine

**Specialty:** Neurology

**Medical School:** Medical College of Georgia

**About Me:** I am proud to be a member of the American Medical Association, the Tennessee Medical Association, and the Nashville Academy of Medicine. I have been a member of TMA since 2001, and I believe in its mission. Currently, I serve on the TMA Board of Trustees, the AMA Delegation, as chair of the Membership & Recruitment Committee, and as Speaker of the House of Delegates. I have also served two prior terms on the TMA Board of Trustees as the first resident member and as a young physician, three terms on the TMAPAC board, three years as Vice-Speaker of the House, and the board of the Tennessee Medical Education Fund.

I was president of the Nashville Academy of Medicine in 2009 and its board chair in 2010. For nearly 25 years, I have attended the TMA-HOD as a delegate. I have contributed to the TMAPAC Capitol Club since its inception 20 years ago. Frequently over the last 20 years, I have participated in TMA's Doctor's Day on the Hill.

And during the formation and early years, I served on the steering committee for the Ingram Institute for Physician Leadership and later became a graduate of both its Physician Leadership Immersion Program and its Lab.

I am an Assistant Clinical Professor at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, founded its neurodiagnostic technologist training program, and helped build its intraoperative neuromonitoring (IONM) fellowship training program. I founded and manage two national tele-neurology practices, Real Time Neuromonitoring Associates and Real Time Tele-Epilepsy Consultants. I am also professionally active as a member of multiple professional society committees and served as President of the American Society of Neurophysiological Monitoring. I have also served on the AMPAC Board of Directors, the Nashville Symphony Board of Directors, and the national Committee on Accreditation for Education in Neurodiagnostic Technology (CoA-NDT). I have received leadership awards by the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Neurology, and received an outstanding entrepreneur award from Emory University.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES



### **Nominee for Region 2: Walter Fletcher, MD**

**City:** Martin

**CMS:** Northwest TN Academy of Medicine

**Specialty:** Emergency Medicine

**Medical School:** UTHSC College of Medicine

**About Me:** I am running for the board position in West Tennessee. I have served in the TMA for several years as a delegate, on the judicial council, and a brief stint as secretary for the West TN Area Consolidated prior to moving to Martin. I am a longtime supporter of the TMA PAC. I have served on the board of the Tennessee Academy Family Physicians, being a past-president and presently an alternate delegate to the American Academy of Family Physicians.

I have also served on the board of the Rural Health Association for a couple of decades with several terms as Treasurer. My biggest strength and where I would contribute most to TMA lies in my knowledge of rural health care needs in Tennessee.

My medical career began in Lexington, TN, providing full scope Family Medicine including nonsurgical obstetrics for about 10 years before moving back to the family farm in Martin. Presently I work in emergency medicine in West Tennessee and serve as the county Medical Examiner for Obion and Weakley Counties, Medical Director for Weakley County EMS.

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## **Nominee for Region 4: Nicole Schlechter, MD, PhD**

**City:** Nashville

**CMS:** Nashville Academy of Medicine

**Specialty:** Obstetrics and Gynecology

**Medical School:** Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

**About Me:** I first joined the Nashville Academy of Medicine (NAM) and the Tennessee Medical Association (TMA) when I was just starting my practice in OB/Gyn, fresh out of residency, back in 1994. I served on the board of directors for NAM from 2009–2015, a fabulous experience in leadership and organized medicine. I have served as the Vice Chief and then Chief of the Department of OB/Gyn, and later as the Vice Chief and then Chief of the Medical Staff at Ascension Saint Thomas Hospital Midtown (formerly Baptist Hospital) during my time in practice.

When I left private practice in late 2019 to become the Chief Medical Officer at Ascension Saint Thomas Hospital Midtown, it seemed like the perfect time to dive back into NAM activities, so I agreed to serve as president for 2021 and board chair for 2022. My engagement has also been consistent at the TMA/statewide level. I am a graduate of the TMA's Physician Leadership College, and still value the relationships I built during that time. I have served as a delegate to the TMA House of Delegates for many years, and I have supported TMA in their legislative efforts as a voice for key issues, especially related to women's health.

Involvement and support of organized medicine is now more important than ever. I have very much treasured and enjoyed the time I've already spent on the TMA board, and I am honored to be considered, once again, for this role on the Board of Trustees, representing region 4. I look forward to continuing to support physicians and practices in providing quality medicine and good health to the people of Tennessee.



## **Nominee for Region 5: Cynthia Rector, MD**

**City:** Cookeville

**CMS:** Upper Cumberland Medical Society

**Specialty:** Psychiatry

**Medical School:** University of Missouri, Columbia

**About Me:** After receiving my Medical Degree in 1992, I moved to Nashville and completed a Psychiatry Residency and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship at Vanderbilt Medical Center. I started my career working in Community Mental Health in the Nashville area. After several years, I relocated to Cookeville but continued to work in Community Mental Health, treating mainly children. In 2010 I opened a private practice in Lebanon and during that time held a variety of positions including TenBroeck Tennessee (hospital within a hospital), Bradford Health Services (addictions and MAT services), Nursing Home Consultation and APRN Supervision. I also became interested in interventional psychiatry and offered TMS and Ketamine services in my practice. Later, I added a Board Certification in Addiction Psychiatry to my Certification in General Psychiatry. After closing my practice in 2017, I worked for 2 years at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Hospital as a staff psychiatrist before returning to work primarily in Community Mental Health. I have served in a variety of mental health settings in the Middle Tennessee Area and am familiar with many of the issues facing physicians in providing care to Tennesseans.

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## **Nominee for Region 7: Debbie Christiansen, MD**

**City:** Knoxville

**CMS:** Knoxville Academy of Medicine

**Specialty:** Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics

**Medical School:** Quillen College of Medicine

**About Me:** I was a partner in Knoxville Pediatric Associates from 1987 until 2014 when I went to work for East Tennessee Children's Hospital as the Medical Director of the Developmental Behavioral Center. Thus I have worked in both private practice as well as an employed physician and realize the different challenges for both of those positions.

I have varied positions of leadership throughout my career. I was Chief of Staff at Children's Hospital from 2001–2003. I have always been active in organized medicine and was President of the Knoxville Academy of Medicine 2008–2010. I have been a member of the Board of Medical Examiners since 2012. I believe that we physicians not only have a duty to our patients but have a responsibility to our profession. And our voice is only as strong as our ability to stand together. I would be honored to serve as the KAM representative to the TMA.

## JUDICIAL COUNCIL



### **Nominee for Region 1: Danielle Hassel, MD**

**City:** Collierville

**CMS:** Memphis Medical Society

**Specialty:** Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

**Medical School:** University of South Alabama Medical School

**About Me:** Dr. Hassel is a longstanding member of TMA. Her organizational involvement includes Physician Leadership College (now Ingram Institute for Physician Leadership), Young Physician Section president, House of Delegates, and Board of Trustees. Her legislative advocacy includes several TMA Doctors' Day on the Hill and speaking to a House committee regarding helmet laws and traumatic brain injuries. Dr. Hassel was elected to the Memphis Medical Society Board of Directors in 2013 and served as president in 2020. Her clinical leadership includes medical director, medical staff president, and medical executive committees. In these positions she gained valuable skills in peer review and conflict resolution that have equipped her for making fair and just decisions as a part of the TMA judicial council.



### **Nominee for Region 3: Dorothy Sinard, MD, FAAP**

**City:** Brentwood

**CMS:** Williamson County Medical Society

**Specialty:** General Pediatrics

**Medical School:** University of Michigan Medical School



**About Me:** I completed my pediatric training at Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, and have been a Fellow in the American Academy of Pediatrics (FAAP) for 30 years. My husband and I have lived in Brentwood for 20 years. Over the past 10 years, I got involved in legislative advocacy through the AAP and TNAAP. I served as a co-chair of the TNAAP Legislative Committee from 2020 through 2024, I co-founded Tennessee Families for Vaccines in 2023, and I am currently serving as the Vice-President of the Williamson County Medical Society. I have been a delegate at TMA’s House of Delegates multiple years as a TNAAP voting representative. I would be honored to continue serving TMA and our medical community as a member of the Judicial Council.

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**Nominee for Region 5: Brent Staton, MD**

**City:** Cookeville

**CMS:** Upper Cumberland Medical Society

**Specialty:** Family Medicine

**Medical School:** Flinders University School of Medicine

**About Me:** Brent D. Staton, M.D., is a practicing Family Medicine physician in Cookeville, Tennessee, and a long-time advocate for physicians across the Upper Cumberland region. Currently seeking re-election as Judicial Councilor for TMA Region 5, Dr. Staton brings proven leadership experience and a strong record of service to the medical community. He served as President of the Upper Cumberland Medical Society (UCMS) from 2022-2023 and continued supporting the 2024-2025 UCMS President, helping promote collaboration and engagement among physicians throughout the region.

Since 2014, Dr. Staton has served as Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer of the Cumberland Center for Healthcare Innovation (CCHI), a physician-led Accountable Care Organization comprised of Primary Care Providers serving rural and underserved communities. Under his leadership, CCHI has saved CMS more than \$125 million while improving outcomes, compliance, and care coordination across its practices.

Through these leadership roles, Dr. Staton has developed a deep understanding of medical governance, ethical standards, and professional accountability. His experience has provided unique insight into the complex challenges facing today’s physicians. He remains committed to upholding the highest standards of medical practice and believes his background positions him to contribute meaningfully to the Judicial Council’s vital role in preserving professional integrity and excellence.

If re-elected, Dr. Staton will continue advocating for physicians across all 19 counties of Region 5 and supporting efforts to advance healthcare throughout Tennessee.



## **Nominee for Region 7: Randall Pearson, MD**

**City:** Oak Ridge

**CMS:** Tennessee Valley Medical Society

**Specialty:** Urology

**Medical School:** UTHSC College of Medicine

**About Me:** I have served on the Board of Medical Examiners for the past 6 years. I also served as President of the Tennessee Valley Medical Society. Being on the Medical Board has certainly enlightened me, as to the role the legislative branch of Tennessee and the physicians are intrinsically entwined. I hope we can get more physicians involved with the legislative process as it affects them far more than they know.

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## **OFFICE POSITIONS**

**President-Elect:** Serves as head of the Tennessee Medical Association for the year following the election. Responsibilities include serving as official spokesperson with media, government officials, and other entities. The president-elect will serve one year as president-elect, one year as president and one year as immediate past president.

**Judicial Council:** The Judicial Council meets annually, or more often if necessary, to investigate alleged improper conduct and oversee formal disciplinary action against members or component medical societies. Councilors also assist component medical societies in maintaining viability in the region. Each region has one councilor serving on the Judicial Council. Councilors serve two-year terms.

**Board of Trustees:** The TMA Board of Trustees determines the policy and details of management of the association between meetings of the TMA House of Delegates. Trustees carry out the directives given by the House. They serve two-year terms