



2021 IPHA Board of Directors Election Candidate Profile

Dr. Anjali Deshpande, PhD, MPH - Iowa City

What do you value about IPHA?

This is a great question. I value that IPHA serves as a "place" that I can learn new things about public health; a "place" where I can talk to colleagues about what is new and changing and challenging about public health; a "place" where I can stay connected with public health practice; and a "place" where I have met "my people" and know that I can bring a unique perspective to the table and contribute to something that has bigger impact than what I can achieve on my own.

Why are you interested in serving on the IPHA Board of Directors?

It has been a pleasure to be a member of IPHA since I moved to Iowa in 2016. I have been able to meet other public health practitioners and make connections throughout the state. I have enjoyed working with Jeneane Moody and Lina Reinders to stand up the Education/Programming subcommittee. I feel I can make even greater contributions to IPHA by serving on the Board of Directors and working to ensure continued focus on the future of public health in Iowa. Being an epidemiologist and educator with connections within Iowa and with public health organizations around the country, I feel that I have skills and connections that could also be leveraged to expand the work that IPHA does and evaluate the impact of that work.

What does it mean to you to be a leader in health equity?

For me, being a leader in health equity means always challenging my own ideas/knowledge about health equity and creating safe spaces/forums/venues for discussion and teaching others. It also means making sure that I am involved in the processes of the change that I want to see in the organizations that I am affiliated with.

How have you been engaged as an IPHA member to date? Please share any committee, board or other ways you have supported IPHA.

I have served since 2018 as the co-chair for the Education/Programming committee and I have served on the public health workforce development subcommittee. I have also worked with IPHA to engage MPH students from the UI as members and advocates for IPHA and public health more broadly.

In which sectors do you have experience?

Academia/Research, Government, and Nonprofit cultural/social organization.

Describe any current or previous board service, leadership, or volunteer experience outside of IPHA.

In my role as MPH Director at UI from 2016-2020, I have served in leadership roles on several committees within the College as well as committees outside the College at the university level. These include Faculty Senate and Faculty Council, as well as the

interdisciplinary steering committee for Interprofessional Education. Also personally, I served in voluntary executive committee roles (including President, Vice President, and Treasurer) in a non-profit cultural/social organization in St. Louis over a 5 year period. Most recently, here in Iowa, I have been serving as a volunteer on the ICCSD's Music Curriculum Review Committee.

Board terms are 3 years long. What would you like to see IPHA achieve during your tenure?

IPHA has a fantastic presence in Iowa and a very dedicated, engaged membership. I would like to see us diversify that membership over the next 3 years to not only include more members of color and other identities but also to become more diverse in sectors engaged and disciplines of study/professional background. I know that IPHA is starting to look at its own structure and policies/practices around health equity and I think that this should be a priority over the next years and can serve as a model for other organizations in Iowa.



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Arlene Prather-O’Kane, MA, RN - Cedar Falls

What do you value about IPHA?

I value current and progressive ideas shared with IPHA members about Public Health issues. With the ever changing field and new innovations, as well as the constancy of Public Health issues and crisis unfolding in our world, IPHA can give a focus to those changes and updates.

Why are you interested in serving on the IPHA Board of Directors?

I love Public Health and remain strong in reviewing current policies and new ways to disseminate Public Health ideas to the community, even after retiring from the Black Hawk County Health Dept. 4 years ago. I believe my experiences with Public Health and my various nursing experiences in mental and behavioral health for at least 18 years, working with refugee and immigrant populations in the past 7 months, and my continued interest in science and core public health values could lend insights for the IPHA Board of Directors.

What does it mean to you to be a leader in health equity?

I believe to be a leader in health equity, I have to be aware of the various populations who live in my community and advocate for prevention and good public health for all. This means evaluating the gaps that are present for those who can't always navigate the health system, understand good prevention to increase better health, and assisting others to increase their "right at the table" attitude so to speak to be an equal player to obtain the best healthcare they can access.

How have you been engaged as an IPHA member to date? Please share any committee, board or other ways you have supported IPHA.

I have been a member of IPHA for many years, including under our agency Black Hawk County Health Dept. and now as a retiree member for the past 4 years. I also participate as an APHA member and have tried to attend the Governor's Conferences over the years to learn more about Public Health ideas and concepts. Presently, I am the only RN working for EMBARC PT to help our "newcomers" to learn prevention medicine and help them navigate the health system. This includes some social work skills related to disability benefits and obtaining food stamps. By working with this population, I am constantly growing with knowledge of how hard our medical system is to navigate, despite my 46 years of being a RN. This also helps with promoting the IPHA values.

In which sectors do you have experience?

Academia/Research, Education (K-12), Field Expertise, and Nonprofit.

Describe any current or previous board service, leadership, or volunteer experience outside of IPHA.

For the past 4+ years, I have been the President of the Board of the Cedar Valley Preschool and Childcare Center in North Cedar Falls. I am also the Treasurer of the PET PALS

organization and a board member for at least 5 years. I am currently the Past CO-President of AAUW for Cedar Falls/Waterloo Branch and served as the CO-President of this branch for almost 2 years. I like to volunteer for the Red Cross when I am able and have deployed 2X in the past 3 years during the Harvey Hurricane, TX and Florence Hurricane, NC. In the Red Cross I served as either an RN or a Mental Health Counselor. I have also had past experience at my church as a Regent (President) for our Catholic Daughters Court for 2 years.

Board terms are 3 years long. What would you like to see IPHA achieve during your tenure?

Increased knowledge and membership for Public Health Efforts and influencing the younger generation to look at Public Health as a possible life long job. Also, move forward to sharing new innovations in Public Health for the public. For example, the speed of the new vaccines for Covid are a prime example of how the world is making expanding efforts towards good Public Health efforts to immunize all folks.



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Dr. Jessica C. Williams, DMD - Ottumwa

What do you value about IPHA?

I value our IPHA members and how committed they are to carrying out IPHA's mission. Everyone involved with IPHA has the drive, integrity, and passion for improving the lives of all Iowans. The positive spirit that resonates throughout IPHA is unmatched and admirable. It makes me honored and motivated to be an active part of this impactful organization.

Why are you interested in serving on the IPHA Board of Directors?

I've always been a big picture person; this is why public health interests me as a practicing dentist. I have seen how the social determinants of health can impact one's daily life and can prevent them from reaching their full health potential. Although we at IPHA have always been aware of the cracks in our broken healthcare system, this pandemic has made it ever more glaring and, better yet, has sprung many more into action to repair it. To be able to help direct IPHA's strategy and use this momentum to improve the health of all Iowans is an exciting prospect to me.

What does it mean to you to be a leader in health equity?

To be a leader in health equity means working to help people achieve their highest health potential by increasing awareness, opportunities, and access to resources. That may mean collecting data, creating programs, performing necessary clinical services, or serving as a voice for those whose voices have historically gone unheard. To be a leader in health equity means working to level the playing field when it comes to healthcare delivery and health outcomes for everyone.

How have you been engaged as an IPHA member to date? Please share any committee, board or other ways you have supported IPHA.

I am currently a member of the IPHA Advocacy Committee, Health Equity Committee and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Workgroup.

In which sectors do you have experience?

Academia/Research, Field Expertise, Nonprofit, and Healthcare Delivery.

Describe any current or previous board service, leadership, or volunteer experience outside of IPHA.

As an undergraduate at Howard University, I worked intricately with Oral Health America's Board of Directors. During my internship with this national dental public health organization, I attended board meetings and arranged board members' meetings in Washington, DC for their Advocacy Day. In dental school, I served as an Albert Schweitzer Fellow, American Dental Education Association Student Liaison for Advocacy and Governmental Relations, and held leadership positions in my chapter's Student National Dental Association. I have had the

opportunity to participate in, develop, and lead pipeline/community programs that help to educate students, create awareness of disparities and health careers, and increase diversity in health professions.

Board terms are 3 years long. What would you like to see IPHA achieve during your tenure?

First, I would like to see IPHA more called upon as a home of public health subject matter experts. We have a breadth and depth of knowledge in our membership that can be used to inform the public, stakeholders, and legislators. Our valuable, wide-ranging expertise needs to be a well-known source for local, statewide and national public health discourse.

I would also love to see IPHA promoting and supporting continued student involvement in the organization. That means creating opportunities to engage undergraduate, graduate, and professional students in our work, whether through volunteer work, internships, or general membership.



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Dr. Peter Wallace, MD - Iowa City

What do you value about IPHA?

The camaraderie and subsequent sharing of experiences.

Why are you interested in serving on the IPHA Board of Directors?

I've been a member 11 years - it's time to give back.

What does it mean to you to be a leader in health equity?

The provision of health care to segments of our population.

How have you been engaged as an IPHA member to date? Please share any committee, board or other ways you have supported IPHA.

Attendance at meetings and legislative activities, and donation of monies.

In which sectors do you have experience?

Nonprofit, Philanthropy, and Private Business.

Describe any current or previous board service, leadership, or volunteer experience outside of IPHA.

Boards: JC Safe Kids Coalition, Iowa City Community Leadership Program, Iowa City Library 1981-1983; Iowa City Community School District Board of Directors 1991-2006; National PTA 1994-1995; Iowa Hospital Association 1995-2003; National Association of School-based Health Clinics 2009-2015; JoCo Board of Health 2011 - present; Healthy Kids Community Care Clinics 2006 - present.

Leadership: Chair, Iowa Chapter AAP 1979-1982; President, Mercy Hospital Iowa City Medical Staff, 1990-1992; President, Johnson County Medical Society 1992-1994; President, ICCSD Board of Directors 2005-2006; President, Iowa City Noon Rotary Club; Chair, JC Board of Health 2012-present;

Volunteer: Many!

Board terms are 3 years long. What would you like to see IPHA achieve during your tenure?

I would like to see IPHA increase its membership, and thus its influence.