

Becky Vacco-Giudice, MSW, LCSW
Candidate for Member-at-Large

From my earliest memories to my professional roles today, sport has been a constant presence in my life. What once drew me in as a young child—the competition, the drive for perfection, the pursuit of performance—has evolved into a deep appreciation for the community sport builds, the identity it shapes, and the sense of belonging it fosters. Over the years, through coaching, clinical practice, and teaching, I've seen firsthand the pressures, expectations, and vulnerabilities athletes often carry. These experiences have shaped my commitment to ensuring that athletes have access to the emotional, social, and mental health support they deserve.

As an Assistant Professor of Social Work at Aurora University, I have the privilege of teaching future social workers while expanding opportunities for MSW students to gain experience in sport-focused practice. I serve as the faculty mentor for the women's volleyball team and the faculty advisor for Project Resilience, a student-led initiative dedicated to creating safe, supportive spaces for student-athletes to talk openly about their mental health and participate in mindful, community-building activities. These roles allow me to work alongside athletes as they navigate both the joys and complexities of collegiate sport.

In my clinical practice, I specialize in working with athletes navigating performance anxiety, injury, burnout, identity shifts, and other challenges unique to competitive environments. As a youth coach, I am passionate about normalizing mental health conversations early in an athlete's development and equipping coaches with the awareness and tools to foster supportive, developmentally attuned environments. I believe that if we teach young athletes that their well-being matters from the start, we change the trajectory of their sport experience and, often, their lives.

I am also committed to creating inclusive, accessible, and affordable opportunities for young athletes. When we expand access, we give all young people the chance to experience the confidence, connection, and community that sport can uniquely provide.

I am running for Member-at-Large because I believe deeply in the mission of ASWIS and in the movement we are building to redefine what supportive sport culture looks like. I want to help expand job opportunities for social workers and field placement opportunities for MSW students interested in sport social work, strengthen educational offerings for members, and elevate the research and advocacy needed to shape healthier sport environments. Above all, I am committed to cultivating systems that allow athletes at every level to thrive fully, supported by environments that value their mental health, identity, and long-term development.

At the heart of my work is a simple belief: when we center the well-being of athletes, we elevate and transform the culture of sport. I would be honored to bring my experience, passion, and perspective to the role of Member-at-Large and to help strengthen a future where athletes are supported comprehensively. I look forward to collaborating with you to create a sport culture that is healthier, more equitable, and fully aligned with the well-being of athletes at every level.

Thank you for your consideration.