
UND SMHS Strategic Plan Individual Unit Report for 2020

GOAL 8 for **Physician Assistant Studies**

LEARNING

UND SMHS Strategic Plan Goal 8: *The SMHS will enhance its purposes of education, service, and discovery by focusing additional efforts toward achieving the broad goals stated in the School's Healthcare Workforce Initiative.*

1. Describe if/how your unit has addressed this goal.

The admission process for the DPAS involves a published preference for ND residents as well as those from bordering states along with those from rural and/or underserved communities. The 5-year matriculant average of those from the tri-state area (ND, MN & SD) is ~80% with ~46% from ND. The most recent class accepted has 60% of students from ND which is cause for concern in terms of clinical placement availability.

Additionally, of the most recent graduating class, 50% are working in primary care which is comparable to the five-year average of 54% of graduates in primary care fields. This is impressive given the national statistic of 25% of PAs work in primary care (2019 Statistical Profile of Certified Physician Assistants © NCCPA 2020). Also, of the most recent graduating class, 50% are working in rural/underserved areas (37% 5-year average) and of these 60% are working in rural/underserved primary care.

2. Describe how your efforts are being assessed.

The matriculant data above shows how the DPAS is training PAs from ND and surrounding states. With the limiting factor of clinical site availability, we have reached a “tipping point” of ND matriculants.

The graduate data above shows that the DPAS continues to meet the primary care mission along with the emphasis to rural/underserved populations.

3. Describe how your unit analyzed these data and what assessments were determined.

The DPAS feels strongly about meeting the mission of the program which has been foundational for its 50-year existence. The data is strong in meeting the mission and yet, there seem to be increasing challenges for graduates to obtain PA employment, especially this past year likely due to the national pandemic. Even prior to the pandemic, advocacy of the profession is paramount to creating PA positions in clinical venues of interest. Professional advocacy is a constant for faculty and students as the profession has less history than other health disciplines.

4. Describe how your unit will implement any further changes and what barriers may exist.

See section above related to challenges. Improvements can be made in terms of more intentional effort to retaining students within the state. This will require professional advocacy efforts on the part of the DPAS and the SMHS to encourage clinical practice sites and hospitals to expand hiring practices.

PROVIDE A RATING OF YOUR PROGRESS ON THIS GOAL: ● On Track

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