

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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NEW DIRECTIONS

Greetings from the UND Department of PA Studies and welcome to the inaugural issue of our alumni newsletter! Many things have happened within the PA program of late which are certainly noteworthy accomplishments as we continue to adapt to an ever-changing and growing profession. First and foremost, we are celebrating 50 years of our wonderful profession this year! Compared to other health professions, we are young; however, we have accomplished so much since the first PA graduates entered the health system in 1967. As you reflect on our roots, think about the upcoming 50th anniversary of the UND PA program, which we will celebrate in 2020. We will be sure to keep you updated on activities commemorating 50 years of educating PAs in North Dakota as details emerge.

Most notably, in 2016 our program was reaccredited for a full ten years following a site visit by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). While there are several interim reports that we must submit to the ARC-PA to maintain continuous accreditation over the next several years, our next on-site visit won't happen until 2026. Although the process is always stressful, the educational standards the ARC-PA requires are important so far as they hold us accountable to preparing excellent PAs.

Also in 2016, we moved from the former School of Medicine and Health Sciences building to the new building located on the corner of Gateway Drive (Highway 2) and Columbia Road in Grand Forks. The building is beautiful and intentionally designed for collaboration and interaction among all students and faculty, regardless of discipline. We have the privilege of utilizing learning spaces with advanced technology and sophisticated simulation manikins. Innovations in active learning strategies engage students throughout the curricular design. Learning communities within the building foster interprofessional communication and activities. We are truly fortunate to enjoy such a beautiful structure in which to educate our PA students.

Admission selections for the Class of 2020 are complete! We have 35 students who will begin classes in May 2018. As you may know, the Department of PA Studies, along with other health sciences programs at the SMHS, was asked by our state legislature to expand the number of students we accept from our state and surrounding areas as part of the North



Dakota Healthcare Workforce Initiative (HWI). The goal of the HWI is to improve and expand our health care workforce broadly. It is my pleasure to report that since the implementation of this project, we have increased our enrolled students from North Dakota and our surrounding states from 51 percent to 83 percent! The challenge now lies in the recruitment and retention of primary care and specialty clinical sites. If you are serving as a clinical preceptor, please accept my sincere gratitude for your dedication. It is an honor to work with such amazing people who are committed to educating students. If you are not yet serving as a clinical preceptor, please consider giving back to the profession by educating the next generation of PAs!

Lastly, I'm extremely grateful for our students, alumni, clinical preceptors, clinical coordinators, staff, and faculty. Thank you all for sharing your knowledge, time, energy, and clinical expertise to develop exceptional PAs. We truly couldn't do this without you, and together we embody the team approach to education and health care.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season!

Jeanie McHugo, PhD, PA-C
Chair, Department of PA Studies



PULSE ON THE PROFESSION: OPTIMAL TEAM PRACTICE

Optimal team practice (OTP) is a new policy approved by the AAPA House of Delegates (May 2017) which calls for expansion of access to care and adaptation of the profession to the current health care marketplace. The new policy calls for laws and regulations that:

- Emphasize PAs' commitment to team practice with the degree of collaboration determined at the practice level
- Eliminate the legal requirement for PAs to have a specific relationship with a physician in order to practice (collaboration and consultation determined at the practice level, not in law)
- Authorize PAs to be directly reimbursed by all public and private insurers
- Create autonomous majority-PA boards to regulate PAs, or give that authority to healing arts or medical boards that have as members both PAs and physicians who practice with PAs

Why was the policy passed?

- With OTP, physicians will be relieved of unnecessary administrative and legal burdens
- PAs will be able to practice to the full extent of their education, training, and experience and begin to see equity in the marketplace with respect to other professions
- Patients will benefit with greater access to care

How has OTP been implemented?

- OTP began with a review of model state practice law by AAPA and the change of supervision to collaboration (2015)

- The FPAR (full practice authority and responsibility) taskforce identified that PAs are “losing out with the administrative burden” of supervision and are invisible to insurance carriers, especially with surgical assists and “incident to” billing (2016)
- 22 states have full practice authority for NP practice
- AAPA survey of membership had 87% support to move forward with OTP
- Proposal changed from FPAR to OTP and passed at the AAPA House of Delegates (2017)

What next?

- State PA chapters will decide whether to pursue changes to state laws and regulations.
- AAPA will work with state chapters to provide resources, guidance, and support as they work to have these policies adopted into law. Additionally, AAPA will lay the groundwork for statutory changes to Medicare to authorize direct PA reimbursement and change in language of PA services.
- Educators, in collaboration with appropriate stakeholders, will develop a task force to address the implications of OTP for PA education and for new graduates.
- PAs will continue to collaborate with, consult with, and refer to physicians and other qualified medical professionals in accordance with the standard of care, the patient's condition, and the PA's education and experience, with the degree of collaboration being determined at the practice level.

PA Q&A: SERVING OUR VETERANS

Helen Reddy, PA-C (Class of 1996)
Fargo Veterans Administration Health Care System



Recently we connected with one of our PA Studies graduates, Helen Reddy ('96), regarding her experience with the PA Studies program, her work with the Fargo VA, and her insight into the evolving nature of the PA profession.

What do you remember most about your time as a student in the UND PA Program?

Learning an incredible amount in a short time. From the techniques of the comprehensive history and physical to differential diagnosis, pharmacology, and chronic disease management, there was so much information to absorb and understand. Every day in class or in the clinical setting was a challenge. It was exciting and daunting at the same time. I love to read and I told myself no fiction books the year I

was in PA school because there was too much academic reading to do and I stuck to that plan.

What were your career goals and aspirations when you graduated from the PA Program?

First of all to “do no harm.” It was a privilege to know that patients would be coming to me and putting their trust in me to care for them. They would be making the choice to see me as a provider and that was a great responsibility. I was interested in working in Family Medicine and developing my skills as a PA. I knew there would be a transition period from my role as an experienced RN to a new graduate PA. I also looked forward to more autonomy in my role and personal life with this career.

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How did your professional goals and plans change through the years?

After one year in the field I found that the rural medicine environment wasn't the best niche for me. I moved back to Fargo to work at the Community Health Center for the next 11 years. This was an opportunity to provide care for a diverse population that was medically underserved. It was a wonderful environment in many ways. The cultural values and beliefs regarding health care and stories that my New American patients shared were incredible. The survival of people who were homeless and others with significant drug and alcohol addictions taught me many things. After this challenging position I was ready for a change. Since 2008 I have been employed in the Surgery Service Line at the Fargo VA Health Care System. Veterans are another special population and it is a privilege to provide care to those who have served our country. From World War II vets to Korean and Vietnam War vets, their life stories are humbling. Vets' medical needs are unique, especially now with those who have served in Desert Storm, and in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Tell us about your clinical service with the UND PA Program.

Through the years I enjoyed going to UND to assist PA students with the hands-on learning of exam techniques. I always had to brush up on my own technique to make sure I was doing it right. I facilitated with testing students throughout their didactic session whenever possible. I have seen new instructors and the changes in the program. I was also able to participate in the interview process. When I am around the students I always realize I need to be at my best and recall the things I was taught 20 years ago along with keeping up with the newest trends in medicine. Students help to keep me from being just "old school."

Why did you become a PA?

Mainly, to advance my career in health care. I enjoyed my 20 years as nurse and wanted to continue in health delivery, but in a different role. Being a PA allowed me to diagnose and treat patients, to impact their health, and continue to work in collaboration with many different disciplines. It was a great fit for me.



Helen Reddy with Dr. Kurt Lindquist (supervising physician) at the Fargo VA

What do you enjoy most about being a PA?

I enjoy the communication with patients. As a PA I feel like I have time to listen. The opportunity to hear what patients' concerns are and see how I can help is challenging, but so rewarding. Making a correct diagnosis that impacts a patient positively is a great day. Getting to know patients, seeing them when they return, and continuing to build on that relationship is so important. Sharing a moment of joy or sadness or a word of encouragement keeps me going.

What observations do you have about the changing PA profession, its place in health care, and its future?

There have been so many changes in the past 20 years that I have been a PA. Computers and technological advances have had a huge impact on health care. I do have concerns that providers may pay more attention to the computer, the CT scan, or MRI than the patient sitting in front of them. We can never lose sight of that patient and their concerns and desires for their health and well-being. It is great to see so many people pursuing the career of physician assistant. I am glad so many of them are young because we will need good providers as I continue to age! Retirement is just around the corner. I think we will always be an integral part of the health care team and cost-effective in delivering quality care. The future seems to hold more possibilities and that may include full practice authority, changes in recertification, and expanding our role in specialty care areas.



STUDENT/PRECEPTOR TEAM

Student

Katherine Packulak, PA-Student (Class of 2018)
River View Health, Fertile, Minn.

What are your career goals and aspirations?

Through my work as a mammography technologist prior to PA school I developed an interest in women's health, particularly breast health. Someday, I would like to practice in a women's health clinic or a breast clinic where I can provide care to women in need. I aspire to be a compassionate provider whom patients trust and enjoy coming to see, and to build a practice that is stable, busy, and professional.

Why did you want to become a PA?

Growing up in a small rural North Dakota town we had PAs and NPs working in our clinic a majority of the time. When I went off to college and started working in health care I learned more about what role PAs played in health care and I thought it was great. I knew that I wanted to work in a health care environment where I was directly involved in patient care, and I also knew that I wanted to have many different career options. Becoming a PA seemed like the perfect fit: I could find a career where I work with patients daily and could live in a small town, but still have plenty of career options available.

What do you enjoy most about being a PA student?

One of the things I enjoy most about being a PA student is seeing new and interesting things during clinical rotations. There is always something new to learn and experience.

What will you remember about your time as a student in the UND PA Program?

I will always remember the people I have met and the relationships I have formed while in the UND PA Program. My classmates are awesome and we are all very supportive of each other. I know that I couldn't have made it this far without our study groups and the helpful tips we exchange. My professors and other UND PA Program faculty are so helpful, and they really want to do everything they can to help us do well and succeed. My preceptor is a great teacher, and is always quizzing me and taking time to help me understand new things.

What observations do you have about the changing PA profession, its place in health care, and its future?

The PA profession was started to help small rural communities have access to health care. I think that is still a very vital part of the profession and always will be. The changes being made currently in the profession, I feel, are only going to help the profession grow. There will always be that physician-PA relationship, but with the changing laws that relationship is seen more as teamwork than supervision. Having more freedom in our practice may also open up more career opportunities that were previously not available to PAs.



Preceptor

Paul Reese, PA-C (Class of 1993)
River View Health, Fertile, Minn.

What do you enjoy most about being a PA preceptor?

I enjoy learning from the student new and refreshing approaches to health care. It has helped me regain and keep my focus on my examination while explaining my reasoning for treatment of my patients.

What goals do you have for your PA student as she progresses through the clinical curriculum?

The top goal is that when she finishes her training she will be able to meet the practice world head-on with confidence. The second and equally important goal is that she will be able to express to patients how important their opinions are concerning their treatment plans and follow-up in terms of becoming healthy and maintaining health.

How has placement in a rural primary care clinical setting enhanced learning and preparedness for clinical practice?

I feel that in the rural setting people tend to trust us more and share their concerns and their illnesses. They do so knowing that in this setting things are more informal and that we take the time needed, without regard for any schedule, to address their entire problem. This helps, I believe, to enhance learning and preparedness in the clinical setting.

How has the design of the alternating didactic and clinical curriculum, not to mention the longitudinal primary care clinical experience, affected student learning in preparedness for clinical practice?

The alternating didactic and clinical settings provide a better learning environment. In my opinion, it allows you to focus on different phases of the physical exam and prepare the student so that he or she can become proficient with history and physical and the focused examination. This is how I was taught and it still affects the way we approach each patient in their evaluation and treatment.

What observations do you have about the changing PA profession, its place in health care, and its future?

I continue to believe that the PA profession is an extension of the physician, especially in primary care. I feel strongly that our role as providers of health care should be an extension of the physicians we work with. We should be able to take the extra time—which sometimes is not available with primary care physicians or specialty providers—with patients for explanation and education. With the increased number of people seeking health care, patients need that liaison to provide the initial step in the referral process to the specialties as needed.

COMMUNITY SERVICE



Students and faculty volunteering for athletic physicals at a local rural high school



Students and faculty volunteering at HERO (Healthcare Equipment Recycling Organization) in Fargo

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2017



Left to right: Savannah Prodzinski, Travis Booke, Alyson Dahl, Brian Adams, Jeanie McHugo, Brian Steen, Agatha Ottem, Kathryn Dietz, Lisa Steers, Rebekah Dunn, Katherine McFarland, and Vicki Andvik.

Of those in the graduating class of 2017 who are currently employed:

- 50 percent are working in primary care
- 46 percent are working in rural areas

Of those graduates from the class of 2017 who are practicing in ND:

- 50 percent are in rural areas
- 50 percent are in primary care
- 38 percent are practicing in rural primary care

JOGGIN' WITH JOSH

Students participating in Joggin' with Josh



RESEARCH AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences Department of Physician Assistant Studies has recognized the research of members of the Class of 2017 and awarded scholarships to students from the Class of 2018.

Research awards were presented to the following graduates of the Class of 2017 on May 12 at the Hooding Ceremony at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Grand Forks:

- Outstanding Scholarly Project, Faculty Choice: Togan Cottrell of Thompsonville, Ill., for her project titled “Evaluating Internet Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in Adults with Depression.” Her preceptors were Federica Nanni, MD, and Jessica DeMarco, PA-C, Sessler, Ill.
- Outstanding Scholarly Project, Student Choice: Rebekah Dunn of Lupton, Mich., for her project titled “Prescription Opioids: A Band-Aid for Chronic Low Back Pain.” Her preceptor was Michael Beasley, MD, West Branch, Mich.

The following scholarships were awarded on May 4 at the North Dakota Academy of Physician Assistants Primary Care Seminar in Fargo:

Class of 2018 Kathy Ohly Memorial Scholarship through the North Dakota Academy of Physician Assistants (\$500):

- Kayla Ternes of Mandan, N.D. Her preceptor was Kayla Olson, PA-C, Beulah, N.D.
- Christina Brooks of Grand Forks, N.D. Her preceptors were Tam Czarnik, MD, and Darlene Kelly, ARNP, McVille, N.D.

The Kathy Ohly Memorial Scholarship was established in 1994 in loving memory of Kathy Ohly, a very active member of the NDAPA. She graduated from the University of North Dakota Nurse Practitioner/Physician Assistant Program in 1976. Ohly was the president of the NDAPA from 1982 to 1984 and chaired the Public Education Committee from 1987 to 1991 and the Bylaws Committee.

UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences Department of Physician Assistant Studies announces research awards and scholarships

She served on the Continuing Medical Education Committee from 1985 to 1987. Ohly served as one of the North Dakota representatives to the American Association of Physician Assistants House of Delegates during many national conventions. She organized and traveled with an orthopedic surgical team to Brazil to provide care for Brazilian children suffering from various orthopedic conditions. Her work in Brazil earned her the AAPA Humanitarian Award in 1987. She passed away on August 15, 1993, after a long and courageous battle with breast cancer.

Class of 2018 Mickey Knutson Scholarship (\$800):

- Larissa Haug of Grand Forks, N.D. Her preceptor was Laura Ermer, PA-C, Cavalier, N.D.

The Knutson endowment provides scholarships to UND students, allowing them the opportunity to complete their studies and pursue careers in the health field. The Knutson endowment is awarded to a graduate who will be working in primary care in a rural or underserved area.


Class of 2018 Katherine Maryann Rasmussen Scholarship (\$2,750):

- Emily Stevenson of Bismarck, N.D. Her preceptor was Michelle Tincher, MD, Bismarck, N.D.
- Cody Baxter of Fargo, N.D. His preceptor was Brittany Michels, PA-C, Fargo, N.D.
- Kayla Ashton of Robbinsdale, Minn. Her preceptor was Patricia Herbert, MD, Andover, Minn.

The Rasmussen endowment provides scholarships to one or more high-achieving and qualified students enrolled within the Physician Assistant Program at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Recipients shall be of high moral character and demonstrate the potential to lead successful lives and careers.

PI ALPHA HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTEES

Pi Alpha is the national physician assistant honor society organized for the promotion and recognition of both PA students and graduates. Membership signifies the inductees’ significant academic achievement and honors them for their leadership, research, community/professional service, and other related activities. The society also encourages a high standard of character and conduct among students and graduates. With this in mind, we are pleased to announce that the following SMHS Physician Assistant Studies students—all of whom maintained a 4.0 GPA—were inducted into the Pi Alpha Honor Society this year. Congratulations!

- Vicki Andvik – Moorhead, Minn.
 - Kathryn Dietz – Columbia, Mo.
 - Annette Larson – Crookston, Minn.
 - Emil Trutwin – Rice, Minn.
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Department of Physician Assistant Studies

1301 N Columbia Rd Stop 9037

Grand Forks, ND 58202

Phone: 701.777.2344

www.med.UND.edu/pa

Want to subscribe to the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences *Physician Assistant Studies Newsletter* or have a great story idea to share with the department? Let us know by calling Rhonda McDaniel at **701.777.2344** or emailing und.med.paprogram@med.UND.edu.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: **JAY METZGER, MPAS, PA-C**



Jay Metzger grew up in Hope, N.D., and has been teaching in the Department of Physician Assistant Studies at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences since 2013. After graduating high school, he enlisted in the United States Army as a medical specialist. Following his service obligation, Jay became a paramedic for FM Ambulance in Fargo, N.D. While working as a paramedic he was enrolled

in undergraduate courses at NDSU and transferred to Des Moines University where he completed his Bachelors of Science in 2003, becoming a physician assistant. He obtained his Master of Physician Assistant Studies from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in 2004. Jay has worked in trauma and general surgery in La Crosse, Wis.; emergency medicine in Bagley, Minn.; and most recently practiced full-time at Family Healthcare in Fargo. He continues to practice part-time at UrgentMed in Fargo. Jay's interest in teaching started while attending PA school. Though he practiced as a PA for over 10 years, he often lectured and contributed to the education of



PA's and other medical professionals during that time. Jay enjoys teaching PA students because of the inherent challenges that are present in the education of future PA's. Jay is currently pursuing his doctorate in educational research at UND.

Jay, his wife Shelley, and their two boys, Jack and Matthew, live in Argusville, N.D.