

Connecticut PA

A Publication of the Connecticut Academy of PAs



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Jason P. Prevelige, MHS, PA-C



After a spring like winter, the official spring is upon us and that means a busy season for ConnAPA!

Vice President Deanna Zimkus and I have recently returned from Washington DC where we represented Connecticut and ConnAPA at the AAPA's annual Leadership and Advocacy Summit. We were excited to see several other PA leaders from Connecticut in attendance as well including, PAEA President Bill Kohlhepp, Yale PA Program Associate Director David Brissette and St. Francis Hospital Director of PA Services Kevin Hickman.

A large focus of the first day was dedicated to two areas; Full Practice Authority for PAs and an alternative certification pathway for PAs. They were both interesting conversations and left everyone thinking that while our profession is now 50 years old, and has grown and advanced so much, there are still many changes to come as the practice and delivery of medicine continue to change. If you are not up to speed on either of these areas, I recommend you read up on the information available on the AAPA's website, as I could not do either topic justice in this small column. I look forward to attending the AAPA House of Delegates in May with the other Connecticut delegates so that we can discuss these important topics further.

Additionally, while most years this conference has us going to Capitol Hill and speaking to our elected officials about various national issues of importance such as the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate and access to opioid addiction treatment (PAs can now prescribe buprenorphine after meeting certain qualifications!!). This year the AAPA decided to focus more on local advocacy. We attended several sessions focused on ways to improve practice in our state. While there is always room for improvement, it is great to hear how good we have it compared to other states. It was a great opportunity to network with PAs from around the country, as well as our AAPA staff; and as a result, we came back with a number of ideas and plans that we'd like to implement.

Since there is always room for improvement, our legislative committee continues to work hard at protecting our practice and improving our practice so that our patients can have the best access to us with fewer unnecessary legislative or institutionally misinterpreted restrictions. Our lobbyist and committee co-chairs and members have already spent many hours up at the Capitol speaking with officials and testifying during this legislative session.

One of the things that annoys me most about social media nowadays are the constant "challenges." In my opinion there is nothing challenging about most of the things posted on the internet, it's just silly stuff. I want to put out a real challenge to all our members, I challenge all of you to bring ConnAPA one new member. Without ConnAPA and its volunteers, the practice environment in this state would look far different. There are constant threats to our practice and without ConnAPA you may have seen a definition of surgery in state statutes that would leave us unable to perform anything deemed surgery (such as lacerations, incision and drainages, and many more complex procedures), our prescriptive abilities could be far more limited, we could have been un-reimbursable by insurance companies, we may not be able to certify a large number of conditions,

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Welcome New Members

Cayla Allard
Sarah Beres
Wanda Bronstein
Jennifer Brook
Matthew Champeau
Dana Chateauneuf
Jayme Clark
Sabrina Colangelo
Gregory Criscuolo
Renee Delahaye
Jocelyn DePathy
Denise Lynn Fitzgerald
Christine Haley
Nicole Hettrich
Melissa Longobardi
David Malchman
Megan McCann
Kristen McCartney
Lindsey Meehan
Donald Osada
Barbara Pelletier
Collin Reinhard
Wendy Russett
Alexandra Shaw
Barbara Skiba
Tim Stewart
Brenna Thommen
Jennifer Young
Ying Zheng

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONT'D

authorizations, etc.; we could have been excluded from medi-spas. My list could go on. Your dues go towards assuring that you continue to have a thriving career. If you bring in a new member and they list you as a referral, we will give each of you \$25 off your membership this year. If you organize a group membership, we will give you \$50 off your membership this year while the others will receive the discount they normally receive for being in a group.

I hope that we see you all at the Charter Oak Conference. Our committee has outdone themselves and put together a stellar conference, with a special anniversary dinner commemorating the 30th annual Charter Oak Conference, as well as the 50th anniversary of the PA profession. We are excited to have the very first AAPA President, Bill Stanhope, who will provide us with his insight of where we have come from and where we are going. As well we will feature Kevin Hickman, Director of PA Services at St. Francis Hospital who will speak to us all on leadership. We will additionally feature poster presentations from many Connecticut PA students. It will be a great time and I hope you can join us!

Best,

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF INCREASED ACCESS TO CLINICAL PLACEMENTS FOR STUDENTS FROM CT PA PROGRAMS

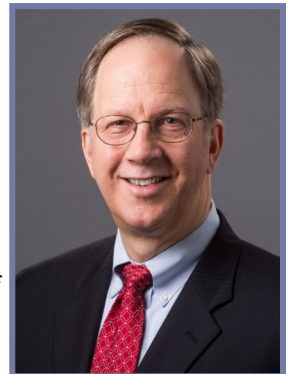
By Bill Kohlhepp, PA-C, DFAAPA

Early in February, the Deans of the Schools of Medicine at UConn and Quinnipiac began a conversation with legislative leaders to address concerns about clinical affiliation sites being taken up by out-of-state students, effectively blocking CT students from those sites. The result of those meetings was the submission of "placeholder bills" to address the situation which were then introduced to both the Senate and House (SB 250 and HB 6496). The initial thought was to give preferential access to sites by medical students from CT programs. Once the various PA programs and ConnAPA became aware of the initiative, efforts were put in place to assure that the legislative language would be broad enough to include PA students.

On February 17, a public hearing on the bills was held by the Connecticut General Assembly's Public Health Committee. For that meeting, ConnAPA submitted written testimony. Also submitting written testimony were the Dean of the College of Health Professions at Sacred Heart and the Provost at the University of Saint Joseph. Attending the hearing and testifying on behalf of Quinnipiac University and its medical students, PA students, and APRN students were Executive Vice President and Provost Mark Thompson and myself as Dean of the School of Health Sciences. In opposition to the proposal, representatives from several off-shore medical schools testified as did Danbury Hospital. Testimony was also heard from the Connecticut Hospital Association, Yale University School of Medicine and the University of Connecticut School Of Medicine. Many representatives from nursing also submitted testimony.

PA Education Association Present Testifies Before Congressional Subcommittee

In early March, in my role as PAEA President, I was invited to testify before the US House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies. It was PAEA's goal to both request continued federal funding for PA programs through the Title VII Primary Care Training and Enhancement grants program and to bring awareness to Congress on perhaps the most important issue facing PA programs: the shortage of clinical sites for training PA students.





My testimony emphasized the commitment and ability of the PA profession to meet the changing health care needs of the nation through increasing their output of graduates. However, I pointed to a key barrier, stating: "Efforts to increase the numbers of PA graduates must contend with one crucial factor: the critical shortage of clinical training sites." I also requested an increase in the funds available through this Title VII program, stating "Federal funding has not kept pace with program growth," My testimony noted that the most recent Primary Care Training and Enhancement competition funded only 13 of the 218 accredited PA programs.

This article adapted with permission from the PAEA Networker.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

by Linda Kowalski, The Kowalski Group, LLC



The 2017 session convened in Hartford on Wednesday, Jan. 4, and members have completed 11 weeks of work.

We are still largely in uncharted territory now with the joint control of the state Senate.

Initially, the 18—18 membership tie in the Senate became 17—17 as two senators, Eric Coleman (D) and Rob Kane (R), resigned to take other public sector positions. Special elections for the two seats occurred on February 28 with both parties retaining their seats; we are back to joint control at 18 seats each. The new senators are Eric Berthel (R/Watertown) and Doug McCrory (D/Hartford). Since Berthel and McCrory had been state Representatives, their vacant seats now go to special elections on April 25. Rep. Steve Dargan (D/West Haven) also resigned before the session started. He was replaced by Dorinda Borer (D).

The Governor outlined his budget for the next biennium on Wednesday, Feb. 8. Many observers were shocked at the range of budget cuts that were outlined in the bill, HB 7027. Many towns, over 120, would lose educational aid under a new proposal that shifts dollars to poorer cities and towns. Municipalities would be on the hook to pay one third of the costs of teacher retirement benefits. Over \$700 million in "savings" are counted in the budget that would come from state employees and retirees, but the state has no mechanism to actually force any concessions. (The governor has suggested, however, that if no concessions are agreed to with the unions, there could be layoffs of about 4,000 state employees.)

We believe the Appropriations committee will look for alternative cuts, but time will tell if they are any more palatable than what the governor proposed. The budget deficit will continue to dominate the session. Reports project a deficit in fiscal 2018 of over \$1.7 billion. This could require a combination of significant tax increases and significant budget cuts to resolve. Whether the votes are there for a package remains to be seen.

Nonetheless, we remain concerned that legislators might put a medical provider tax on the table for discussion. The problem is that it could raise a substantial amount of revenue from a fairly small number of payors.

We are also concerned that legislators might look at the largest single program in the state budget, Medicaid, for additional cuts. We are watching this closely as we want to protect the Physician Assistant's role of participating in this important program.

As the session proceeds, we are tracking a number of important initiatives for ConnAPA in the healthcare and insurance fields, and want to outline several of them here.

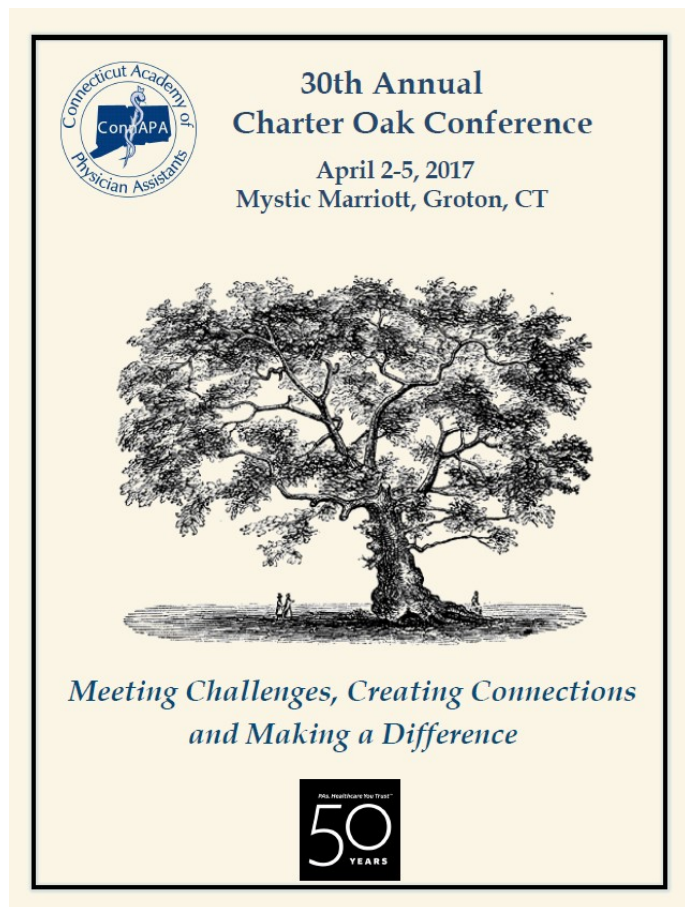
The Public Health committee did not raise a specific bill on defining surgery in statute, a solid win for the profession. I believe the committee co-chairs realized there is still no consensus on the matter among affected parties.

Regarding the scope of practice process, a bill has been heard in the Public Health committee (HB 5812) that would set a five-year waiting period between the submission of a specific proposal and its resubmission to DPH if the matter had not been selected by the commissioner for review.

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CHARTER OAK CONFERENCE UPDATE

by Sarah Clark, MHS, PA-C and Deanna Zimkus, MHS, PA-C, Co-Chairs



The education committee has been hard at work finalizing the last few details for 2017's COC at the Mystic Marriott.

We plan to commemorate the 30th COC and the 50th anniversary of the profession by having a dinner Sunday evening immediately following the general session. We will begin the evening with a cocktail hour, networking and student poster presentations. William Stanhope, the first AAPA president will be a special guest speaker followed by Kevin Hickman, director of PAs at Saint Francis Hospital, who will give a CME lecture on PA Leadership. This will be a casual evening for all attendees.

We are also thrilled to have Josanne Pagel, AAPA President as our keynote speaker for our Annual Business luncheon on Tuesday. We have great lectures lined up this year and are excited to see everyone in Groton!

Online registration for the conference is open until March 24th but onsite registrations will be accommodated.



REMINDER:

Exhibit Hall will be open on Monday! Lots of great prizes to win.

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QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY STUDENT UPDATE

by Margarita Kolitsas, PA-S and Kyle Putnam, PA-S



The class of 2018 is halfway through their last didactic year semester; currently studying surgery, pediatrics, OB/GYN, behavioral medicine, psychosocial issues, and clinical skills. The class of 2019 has been largely set and each student will be paired with a Student Mentor who will help guide them through the transition into Quinnipiac. Preparations are well under way for the annual Cow Chip Bingo and 5k Run For Your Life fundraiser that will be held Saturday, April 8th at the North Haven campus. The class has worked hard to sell Cow Chip Bingo tickets and is currently at about 1/3 of our 1000 ticket goal, with 2 months left to sell. Numerous businesses have donated this event including Abbott Printing, Chartwells, Mr. Trophy, and some local running stores. The fundraiser benefits the Physician Assistant Foundation's Caring for Communities Program and the QU PA Student Society Children's Literacy Project.

Five members of the class traveled with Health Horizons International in January for the annual medical service trip to the Dominican Republic. Working with a team of doctors, interpreters, and program staff, the students offered primary care services to people of the Montellano Region. Members of these communities live in startling poverty with unemployment rates as high as 80% and very little medical services. Students were important members of the clinic team rotating through different stations of triage, pharmacy, consultation and doing home visits for patients that could not make it. All five felt it was an incredible experience that allowed them to build on the knowledge from Internal Medicine courses and grow clinical skills that will help them in rotations. It was the last group that will travel with HHI as the organization moves in the direction of a more policy and public health oriented mission.

The PA Diversity Committee at Quinnipiac University is made up of a passionate group of individuals dedicated to bringing people together. It is with that mission in mind that they've decided to put on the 1st Annual Quinnipiac's Got Talent show on March 25th. They have 10 people signed up, with a goal of 30, for the show that is open to all graduate students of Quinnipiac. The following statement by one of the committee members will tell you what it's all about:

1st Annual Quinnipiac's Got Talent

by Sadia Sayed Haq, PA Diversity Committee

"Being in a graduate program is a strong endeavor. I think every graduate student knows how much time, hard work and dedication it takes to succeed. But I think the most important skills we all learn is team work and how vital it is to succeed in almost any profession. Being in a PA program, we learn every day the importance of teamwork and how it is vital in becoming a great practitioner. Being so busy in our programs, we realized we didn't have a chance to really connect with other graduate programs because of the different program schedules. So the PA diversity team wanted to bridge that gap. We wanted to do something that would bring together our graduate community as one and have fun with. We are literally surrounded by some of the most talented people from all over the U.S. So why not show off some of that talent? That's why we decided to start the very first Graduate Talent show hosted by the PA diversity club. We hope that this will bridge the gap between our programs, build a stronger community and inspire one another. We will be using the proceeds from this show in two ways. First, we will donate to a charity in need of support and funds. Second, we will use some of the funds to host more events throughout the year. If we can make this a success, the goal is to continue this every year from here on out for future QU graduate students."

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SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY STUDENT UPDATE

by Dennafrage Herald, PA-S and Shannon Carroll, PA-S

Hello from the Sacred Heart University Physician Assistant Program! As the inaugural class, we are thrilled to make our mark here in Stamford! There are 27 students in our class and we are looking forward to expanding our numbers with the incoming class that starts in August.

We are well into our second term and forging our legacy in the newly renovated Tandet Center on the Stamford Hospital campus. Our facilities are located on the second floor and with 14,000 square feet of classrooms, patient assessment rooms, faculty offices, and a lab with a state of the art Anatomage table--we are poised, ready and excited to learn! We are anxiously awaiting our first clinical rotation in August when we can finally put all our didactic year knowledge to use.



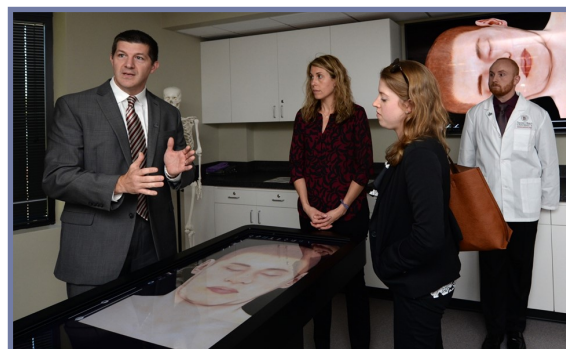
Sacred Heart UNIVERSITY

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES



As Pioneers, we are constantly searching for ways to make our mark on the program but also on the community! One of our projects this year has been Fresh Check Day. Fresh Check Day is a program held throughout the nation to bring awareness of mental health resources and coping strategies to college students to create an approachable atmosphere where students are encouraged to engage in dialogue about mental health. The class has worked hard to make this is an exciting and educational event and hope to aid in lifting the stigma surrounding mental health. The event is scheduled for April 28, 2017, from 12pm to 2pm at the Sacred Heart University Fairfield Campus, so if you are in the area, please join us!

Another exciting event on the horizon is a spring break trip to Uganda! The PA Program Director, Dr. Teresa Thetford, and Nicole Tittarelli, PA-S along with a few other SHU faculty will be making the trip to establish clinical rotation opportunities. The group will be touring various hospitals as well as Makerere University, one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in Africa. They will also be visiting the African Community Center for Social Sustainability, which focuses its work on vulnerable populations such as people living with HIV-AIDS, orphans, and children. However, it is not all work as the group will also be visiting the source of the Nile, Murchison Falls National Park and viewing a traditional African cultural dance!



We are thrilled to be a part of the PA academic community in Connecticut and look forward to sharing our journey with you!



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YALE STUDENT UPDATE

By Rebecca McCurdy, PA-S

In December members of the Class of 2016 completed their thesis projects and selected honors projects were presented to classmates and faculty. Highlights from this presentation included Natalie Brim's "Melatonin as an adjuvant therapy for neonatal abstinence syndrome: a randomized controlled trial" and Megan Lampron's "Efficacy of Combination therapy on the maintenance of remission in pediatric Crohn's Disease." Additionally, selected individuals from the class presented a summary of their international rotations experiences that included traveling to Peru, Argentina, Spain and Rwanda. Most importantly, this past December the Class of 2016 graduated! Several honors and awards were given out during the ceremony including Outstanding Didactic Course awarded to Drs. Steward and Kapadia, Anatomy, the Jack Cole Society Award to Rita Rienzo and an Outstanding Preceptor Award to Anita Dunn, PA-C. This past semester all three classes and faculty had the opportunity to celebrate the Class of 2016 and the holidays at the Yale Graduate Club.

The class of 2017 continues in their clinical rotations, as well as working on their thesis projects. Christina Carbone, a member of the class of 2017 recently had a poster accepted at the American Thoracic Society International Conference which will be presented this May on "Airway Tethering Following Insertion of Endobronchial Coils for Emphysema." Additionally, Editha Setiawan was accepted as one of the Paul Ambrose Scholars awarded by the Association for Prevention Teaching & Research.

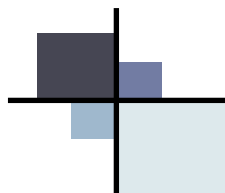
The class of 2018 continues with their didactic year and continuing to participate in the Interprofessional Longitudinal Clinical Experience (ILCE). Students are working in their interprofessional teams to create a project of their culminating experiences this May.

Students have also been meeting with their medical peers to design the annual Service of Gratitude to honor the donors we work with in Anatomy Lab. In addition, the class of 2018 is proud to announce that Yukari Suzuki recently was appointed to the position of Lab Director at the HAVEN free clinic.

The class of 2017 and 2018 continue to engage in weekly volunteer activities in the New Haven community, the annual Yale-Harvard blood drive, the Neighborhood Health Project and the Haven Free Clinic. Several students also have been vigilant in participating in the Yale Healthcare Coalition's initiatives to protect patient's health care access.



The Yale PA Class of 2016



UNIVERSITY OF BRIDGEPORT STUDENT UPDATE

By Kelsey Wilson, PA-S and Vance Baughman, PA-S



The academic year is in full swing, with the Class of 2019 about half way through our first term! During this term we have successfully completed our clinical medicine modules for psychiatry and neurology, and by the end of April, we will have also completed dermatology and HEENT. Since electing our own class officers and completing our first competency exam we feel that we have found our place as a class at UBPAI. Our class officers have been organizing meetings with the class and professors in order to ensure that everyone is experiencing a smooth transition into the PA program. Although the first couple of weeks can be overwhelming, we feel that we have been able to get into a strong routine with classes and exams. Our first official full class officer meeting will be taking place on March, 9th.



The 5th Annual Bruce Fichandler Student Society Scholarship Gala took place on February 18th, 2017 and was a huge success. All three cohorts were able to come together, with staff and local physician assistants, to celebrate a night of awards and dancing to help raise money for the scholarship foundation.

The Class of 2018 is currently one month away from starting their first clinical rotation, and are very eager to get into the field and put all their medical knowledge to use. While we will miss having the Class of 2018 on campus with us, we are looking forward to hearing all the positive feedback they will be able to offer from their rotations and preceptors. The Class of 2018 is currently preparing for their clinical rotations by conducting patient interviews, giving case presentations, as well as preparing for their PACRAT. Before they leave for rotations they are finishing their last Clinical Medicine modules including Psychiatry, OBGYN, and Emergency Medicine alongside their Fundamentals of Surgery course.

While preparing for rotations the class of 2018 has successfully established their Challenge Bowl Team. The team looks forward to competing in Las Vegas in May at the AAPA conference. The Challenge Bowl Team members and alternates for the Class of 2018 are: Ryan Wessels, Hayley Miller, Kelly Caufield, Connor Rowntree, and Kate Armstrong. We know many UBPAI students from all classes will be at the Challenge Bowl later this month to support our fellow classmates.



The Class of 2017 will be finishing their last clinical rotation on March 22nd, 2017. The class is very excited about this and feels that their hard work in the classroom during the didactic year really paid off. We have been proud of all the positive feedback we have received about our students from their preceptors throughout their rotations. The students will be returning to campus to take their callback exams and will start the preparations for their graduate logistics course before completing the program and graduating this May. We look forward to having the Class of 2017 on campus with us and we are excited to hear about their rotations and experiences as well as all the advice they will be able to offer.

It's News to Us...

Do you have an article you'd like to submit? Are you or one of your colleagues doing something amazing? Professional news, activities, new procedures, stories of experience, medical missions, member spotlight or editorial...send it to us! We are now accepting article submissions for our Fall and Winter editions. All submissions can be sent to Amanda Campbell, Editor at connapa@ssmgt.com for review. Having your article published is a great way to add to your CV!

UPDATE FROM THE CT PAF

The Connecticut PA Foundation continues to work on fundraising for student scholarships. Recently in early February, Rick and Julie Pope hosted the first ever Drew Morten Scholarship Dinner Series, to raise money for the scholarship in Drew's honor. It was a wonderful evening of reminiscing and celebrating his life and what he has done for our profession. Thank you to Rick and Julie for your dedication to the Foundation and to Drew. If anyone is interested in learning more about hosting a Scholarship Dinner Series, please contact CT PAF President, Becky Orsulak at raorsulak@gmail.com.

We also recently held our annual Bowl-a-rama on February 24th. Thank you to all who participated and donated!

We are currently reviewing all submitted scholarship applications and are excited to announce the winners at the 30th Annual Charter Oak Conference Annual Business Luncheon on Tuesday April 4th. Each year we continued to be impressed by all of the applicants and their accomplishments.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE CONT'D



A bill has been heard by the same committee that requires a patient to have an in-person medical appointment prior to utilizing telehealth for a specific condition (HB 5811). Please note that Physician Assistants are listed in the law as a health profession that can provide telehealth services.

A top priority for ConnAPA remains to ensure that the current law is maintained requiring all individual health policies to adhere to state coverage mandates and provide the widest range of providers and services to enrollees. This will mean all policies would continue to cover services provided by a Physician Assistant. Without this requirement that was enacted in 2011, the likelihood is great that insurers would drop an array of services, treatments and provider groups. The insurance and business lobby are contending that fewer mandates and professions would equate to lower premiums for consumers—and

that is a very potent message since the public has seen very large increases in the individual market in the last two years. I believe this discussion will go through much of the session, but we are working hard to protect the current role for PAs in the state-regulated health insurance market.

We are also working to make a modification to the PA practice act that would no longer require the supervising physician to make a notation in a patient's medical record when a PA prescribes a schedule II or III drug. We are also seeking to reference PA's specifically in a variety of state statutes that also list APRN's in performing procedures or medical functions. Both matters are currently being considered by the Public Health committee.

In conclusion, committees are starting to wrap up their public hearings. By the end of the month, most committees will have reached the deadline to report bills out to the floor. In early April, the Appropriations committee and Finance, Revenue and Bonding committee, will accelerate their work on the budget and tax package, respectively. As mentioned, the state is facing a \$1.7 billion deficit in the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2017. Whether this gap can be closed with a new budget this session is an open question right now. The last thing we need is a prolonged and contentious Special Session that could go all summer and into the Fall, an echo of 1991's fight over the income tax.

As always, thank you for the wonderful job you do for your patients as members of the important Physician Assistant profession.





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