

Connecticut PA

A Publication of the Connecticut Academy of PAs



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Deanna JC Zimkus, MHS. PA-C



Greetings to all! It has been a busy fall for ConnAPA. We held a fall CME event entitled "The Opioid Epidemic: Become Part of the Solution" at the Trumbull Marriott on October 13, 2017. The nationally renowned Stutman and Switalski group was a big hit and a great way to start the day. The event was well attended by over 150 clinicians and students. We hope to continue to offer a fall CME event in future years as well, based on feedback from attendees.

Charter Oak conference planning is moving full steam ahead. All speakers are confirmed. We have a great panel of speakers lined up. We will be offering up to 30 hours of CME. We will not be offering any workshops. Our keynote speaker will speak about Human trafficking. The COC will be returning to the Mystic Marriott, March 25-28, 2018 (Sunday-Wednesday). The Marriott renovations are

already underway. **REGISTRATION FOR THE CONFERENCE IS OPEN. REGISTER BEFORE 12/31/17 TO SECURE DISCOUNTED RATES!**

The legislative committee has worked incredibly hard over the past few months. Our scope of practice proposal was submitted on 8/15/17 to the DPH. Unfortunately, our scope proposal was not chosen by the committee for review. We continue to work towards modernization of statutory language in our state. More news to come in the spring.

The Kowalski group continues to work hard for us at the Capitol. Here are some recent legislative changes affecting PAs:

- HB 7171: Allows for Athletic Trainers to work under the guidance of PAs, utilizing a written agreement or protocol where PAs could be compensated for their guidance
- HB 7222: Requires that medical providers report birth defects in children up to one year of age to the DPH, PAs are specifically named as one of the eligible reporters
- HB 7174: PAs can give orders for a peripheral/IV with pre-packaged normal saline to be performed by a phlebotomist

Two board members will be attending the 2018 Leadership and Advocacy Summit in Arlington, VA in February.

Membership numbers continue to be suboptimal. Mick Devanney and Sheree Piperidis have done a great job overall reaching out to PAs across the state. We continue to have ConnAPA board members visit the state's PA programs 1st and 3rd year classes to discuss the importance of state level organization membership. Membership dues help to support our lobbying group and our executive management team. I implore you to speak to all of your colleagues and encourage them to join ConnAPA. Our Board of Directors is made up of all volunteer practicing PAs who dedicate many hours to our organization. The meager membership fee of \$125 per year goes a long way to help our great profession!

I wish you and your families a healthy and Happy Holiday Season!

Best,

Deanna JC Zimkus, MHS. PA-C



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THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC: BECOME PART OF THE SOLUTION

by Jason Prevelige, MHS, PA-C

On October 13, 2017, ConnAPA presented a one-day CME event entitled, *The Opioid Epidemic: Become Part of the Solution*, at the Trumbull Marriott. This event was held for several purposes including:

- To address the current hot topic of the opioid epidemic
- To offer a single day CME event as requested by the membership through various survey methods in recent years
- To fulfill a contractual commitment to the Trumbull Marriott from the canceled event planned for earlier in the year

The event was initially planned for PAs, NPs, and physicians, as well as students from all three disciplines. A full day was organized and included speakers from various professions that are impacted by opioid prescribing and abuse in some way. Those professions included law enforcement, the judicial branch, counseling, pharmacy and medicine as represented by both a PA and a physician.

Overall the event was a success as indicated by the attendance of over 150 PAs, NPs, Physicians and PA students.

- The Stutman-Switalski Group featuring Bob Stutman, once the head of the DEA's New York office and one of the nation's top experts on drugs & Judge Jodi Switalski, a former prosecutor and judge that has led the fight against opioid abuse in Michigan and is a featured speaker nationwide on drug abuse
 - Jeffrey Quamme, the Executive Director of the Connecticut Certification Board, is a nationally sought after trainer/educator with over 25 years of experience in medication assisted treatment, co-occurring disorders and group treatment
 - Jenn Nemic, PharmD, is a clinical pharmacist closely involved in opioid education and recently spoke to the Republican Attorney General Association
 - Alan Mathis, President and CEO of Liberation Programs, has transformed the agency into one of Connecticut's leading non-profit substance abuse agencies providing evidence based, targeted care
 - Philip Corvo, MD, is the Chairman of Surgery and Director of Critical Care for St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury, he has extensive experience in pioneering opioid sparing surgical techniques and recently presented to the American College of Surgeons Quality and Safety Conference on the origins of the opioid epidemic
 - Elizabeth Roessler, PA-C is a faculty member of the Yale PA Program and serves on the Board of Directors of the HAVEN program

The day will ended with a reception celebrating 50 years of the PA profession. ConnAPA hopes to make a fall CME program an annual event.



Bob Stutman, of the Stutman Switalski Group addresses the attendees



Quinnipiac students attending the day's program

CTPAF UPDATE

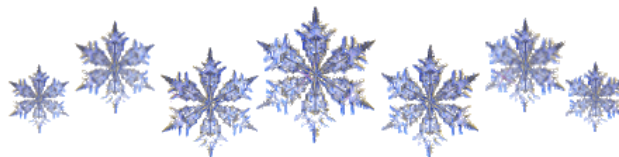
by Becky Orsulak, PA-C, PAF President

The CTPAF hosted our annual fall Wine and Tapas Event at Geronimo Tequila Bar & Southwest Grill in New Haven, CT on Thursday November 30, 2017. What a fun evening! Thank you to all of those who attended and supported us.

The board met in early December to formulate the scholarship application, which is now released to applicants. All scholarship applications are due by February 1, 2018. Please email ctpafscholarship@gmail.com with any questions and encourage all students who are attending PA school within the state of CT, or those who are from CT attending PA school elsewhere, to apply!

We are looking forward to our annual Bowl-a-rama event at Johnson's Duckpin Lanes in Hamden, CT on Friday February 23, 2018.

Happy Holidays to all, and thank you for all of your support and continued donations for PA student scholarships!



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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

by Linda Kowalski, The Kowalski Group



There have been several major developments on the government affairs front the past few months that I am pleased to outline here for you.

First, the state's budget gridlock is over. Ultimately, in late October the two parties came together and passed a bipartisan budget that reduced the deficit through new revenues, spending cuts and new policies to limit future appropriations and bonding.

If there is one positive to the long-running budget ordeal, it is this: Throughout this process we were working to make sure that a medical provider tax was *not* enacted. We succeeded in that endeavor—no such tax was passed.

Meanwhile, there were a number of healthcare-related provisions that were folded into the budget plan, including: Health information technology, all payer claims database and a new Office of Health Strategy that will coordinate health policies and electronic health records.

Unfortunately, preliminary estimates are placing the \$20 billion budget as being about \$222.5 million in the red. This has triggered the Governor to submit a new deficit mitigation plan to the General Assembly. If new cuts are to be made in this budget (that runs from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018) we are watching carefully as to whether Medicaid could potentially be targeted for reductions. If so, this could have ramifications for the healthcare of the state's most vulnerable citizens.

A Special Session could be called for January when the legislature is expected to convene during the first week to restore \$54 million for the Medicare Savings Program, along with making \$54 million in cuts in other accounts. The exact date of a special session has not been announced, but it could be January 4 or 5, depending on when the highest number of lawmakers can attend.

An important action is being moved forward in Washington that could have significant ramifications for the state health exchanges. The Federal Department of Health and Human Services has issued a proposed rule that will allow states to define Essential Health Benefits in individual health plans under the Affordable Care Act. This opens the door, for example, for states to develop a new definition that is narrow and excludes state coverage mandates.

As we have reported to you in the past, insurers are claiming to state legislators that the reason premiums continue to increase is due to mandated medical treatments provided by specific mandated providers. They want the flexibility to offer plans that pick and choose which rules are followed. We have countered that the mandates, such as the existing one for Physician Assistants, represent services that consumers need and want and that without a mandate, coverage would be sketchy at best.

Continued on page 11

REPORT FROM THE CONNECTICUT MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

By Carol Ekonomides, PA-C

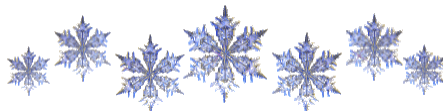
I have been the physician assistant fellow member of the Connecticut Medical Examining Board for the last two years. The board is comprised of physicians, attorneys, lay advisers, assistant attorney general and me and serves as a disciplinary agent for physicians and physician assistants. Complaints about a practitioner are referred to the Public Health Committee which investigates the merit. Upon finding a good cause following a hearing, the case is referred to the CT Medical Examining Board who determines the penalty. Consequences could include a civil penalty, a letter of reprimand or censure of licensee, a probationary status that requires regular reports that are the basis of the probation, limitations on the practitioner's license, suspension or revocation of the license.

Examples of recent cases include false Medicare claims, inadequate documentation, sexual misconduct, impairment of the practitioner, failure to report an abnormal lab result and most frequently inappropriate prescribing of narcotics.

The hearings are public and the results are published the following day. The outcome is reported to the National Practitioner Data Base.

I have learned much about the risks that we all face as physician assistants and would like to share a few thoughts with my colleagues. In light of the opioid epidemic and the recent conference presented by ConnAPA, I reiterate a few comments made at the conference and by the CT Medical Examining Board. Prescribe with a therapeutic purpose and provide adequate documentation. Schedule frequent interim examinations or assessments. Consider coordinating care with a mental health provider or addiction specialists. Keep your records updated and complete. As stated in the Opioid Epidemic Conference, "If you didn't write it, you didn't do it".

Fortunately, there has only been one in case involving a physician assistant during my time on the board. I hope that none of us will be subjected to that process.



OPEN BOARD SEATS

Dan Mussen, PA-C and Deanna Zimkus, PA-C

Please read the information below for Vacant Board seats in our state. If any member is interested in taking on a position, please
e-mail: connapa@ssmgt.com

What state or local boards have reserved a seat for a PA, but the seat is vacant?

DMV
Motor Vehicle Operator's License Medical Advisory Board
ConnAPA is allowed to nominate a member to this board
state statute 14-46b, www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_246.htm#sec_14-46b
Current PA member: VACANT

What boards do not have a position for a PA, but it would be advantageous to be represented? Examples include insurance, work comp, medical organizations, social services, & state mandated boards.
CT Center for Primary Care <http://www.prohealthmd.com/ccpc/>

2018 CHARTER OAK CONFERENCE MARCH 25-28 - MYSTIC MARRIOTT, GROTON REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

The Connecticut Academy of Physician Assistants Charter Oak Conference (COC) is one of the premier PA conferences in the country. The COC has built a reputation for the quality of its programs, faculty and attendees. The Charter Oak Conference is open to PAs and APRNs so please let your colleagues know!

As usual we have an exciting lineup of lectures covering a wide range of clinical topics, a full program, registration, hotel information is available by clicking [here](#)

Take advantage of a special limited Charter Oak Conference registration offer for the Holidays

If you register for the COC online anytime in the month of December,
you will receive a special discounted registration rate.
This is a HUGE savings as registration rates will go up on January 1st.

***Click on the snowman below to start your registration
but hurry December 31st is the deadline for maximum savings on your registration!***



4 Breakfasts, 3 lunches, snack breaks and Welcome reception are all included in your registration!

Exhibit Hall/Raffle Prizes
Student poster presentations
Social and Networking
Job Board

DON'T DELAY..REGISTER TODAY!

This program is not yet approved for CME credit. Conference organizers have requested 30 AAPA Category 1 CME credits from the AAPA Review Panel. The total number of approved credits is yet to be determined.





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YALE NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL EMERGENCY MEDICINE PA RESIDENCY

by Kevin Burns, PA-C, DFAAPA

While they have been in existence since the 1970's, PA postgraduate education programs have seen an exponential growth over the past few years. Commonly referred to as residency or fellowship programs, these postgraduate programs offer a unique opportunity for PAs to gain expertise in their chosen specialty through a combination of didactic and clinical experiences.

Since 2015, Yale New Haven Hospital has offered an emergency medicine PA residency program, the first such emergency medicine residency here in Connecticut. Operated in partnership with the Yale School of Medicine Department of Emergency Medicine, the YNH EMPA Residency is an 18-month training program that is modeled upon our well-established physician residency program. Accepting both PA and FNP applicants, two PA residents per year join a class of 15 physician residents every June to begin learning the challenging specialty of emergency medicine.

PA residents rotate through a variety of different clinical settings, both in emergency departments and on off-service rotations designed to strengthen a variety of skills. In addition to several months of rotations in the ED at the main campus of Yale New Haven Hospital, PA residents also rotate to the YNH- Saint Raphael Campus, the Yale Shoreline ED in Guilford, and to Bridgeport Hospital. These rotations give the PA resident experience practicing in a wide range of ED settings, from the large academic trauma center to the small free-standing ED. The ED rotations also include 10 weeks of dedicated pediatric emergency medicine rotations.

One of the advantages of a PA residency is the opportunity to spend time outside of the ED, which allows the PA resident a chance to hone skills that they may not frequently perform in the emergency department. Examples of these rotations include the Medical ICU, anesthesia, trauma surgery, ophthalmology, ultrasound and EMS. From mastering intubation during anesthesia to experiencing medical care in the back of a helicopter during EMS, the PA residents can take part in experiences that they will carry with them for the rest of their careers. The residents also have an opportunity to take part in an elective rotation; recent examples of electives have included OB/GYN in Bridgeport and a Wilderness Medicine course at Zion National Park in Utah.

While clinical time is vital, the residency also has a strong emphasis on didactic education. Residents attend 5 hours of weekly conference, which may include lectures, small group classes, cadaver labs and simulation training. The PA residency also includes a dedicated month-long simulation rotation at our newly constructed, state of the art simulation center. Over the course of the program our PA residents attend several nationally-recognized courses, including ACLS, PALS, ATLS, and a formal difficult airway course (which includes traveling to Baltimore for 2 days of cadaver-based airway practice). Our residents this year also traveled to Phoenix to attend the Society of Emergency Medicine PAs (SEMPA) conference, where they represented Yale in the first ever EMPA Resident Quiz Bowl!

If you think that you might want to pursue an EM residency, we encourage you to apply or to just reach out to us with any questions. Application requirements and additional information can be found on our [website](#); you can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter (@YaleEMPA) for updates, announcements, and photos of the program.

Welcome New Members

Lauren Almonte

Jocelyn Batista

Carleen Blois

Deborah Cooke

Laura Gonzalez

George Haynor

Russell Longendorfer

Joshua Miles



YALE STUDENT UPDATE



The Annual Hunger and Homelessness Auction was established in 1993 by Yale health professional students interested in raising community awareness of and alleviating the adversity caused by hunger and homelessness in the Greater New Haven area. This year, the Yale PA program raised \$1930 for organization in the city that addresses issues of hunger and homelessness. We also won our beloved anatomy teacher's bowtie in the auction for the ninth consecutive year. Overall, it was a very successful event.

We celebrated three third year students on their outstanding theses: Patrick Ketchersid PA-SIII, Michelle Giweric PA-SIII and Amy Li PA-SIII. Thank you to their advisors Drs. Dembry, Bekui and Philpotts for their mentorship and guidance. All of the class of 2017 have officially finished their theses and are ready to graduate!



First year students with Dr. Stewart, our



Yale Physician Associate Program Class of 2017

On Monday, December 11, the program graduated 39 students, making up the program's 44th class since the inaugural class of 5 students in 1973. Yale's PA program has now graduated over 1,200 physician associates. We know they'll represent us well and make meaningful contributions to healthcare. The class is excited to get a start on their new careers, but we will be sad to see them go!

Students and faculty gathered together on December 1 to celebrate the holiday season. This annual festivity was attended by members of PA classes 2017 through 2019 as well as faculty members and

distinguished professors. We all had a wonderful time celebrating the holidays before buckling down through finals and the last clinical rotations of the year.



Third year students Patrick Ketchersid PA-SIII, Michelle Giweric PA-SIII and Amy Li PA-SIII with their advisors after their thesis presentation



Alexandria Garino, MS, PA-C

Alexandria (Xandi) Garino, MS, PA-C, was appointed as the PA program director on December 1. Xandi joined the PA Program faculty in 2006 and has been serving with distinction as interim director of the program since July 2016. Xandi is strongly committed to the education of highly skilled and compassionate PA clinicians, and she places a high value on the program's research focus. As the program enters its 47th year, Xandi's expertise, strategic capabilities, and collaborative leadership style will enable her to uphold the program's tradition of excellence, while strategically adapting the program to address society's changing healthcare landscape.



First year students at the Holiday party

QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY STUDENT UPDATE

by Emily Brook, PA-S and Mark Elsesser, PA-S



The fall is a busy time for the Quinnipiac University Physician Assistant program. The Class of 2019 has finished the fall semester, while the Class of 2018 is finishing up their fifth clinical rotation. The Class of 2019 has started their pre-clinical rotation, where we apply our knowledge from the classroom setting clinically across many areas of medicine at sites throughout Connecticut, practicing history and physical examination skills.

The fall also marked an important milestone of the PA profession, with the 50th anniversary of PAs celebrated during PA week in October. Our classes participated by giving back to the community and also raising awareness for the profession by hosting a foot care clinic at the New Haven men's homeless shelter, and a fitness fair at the Mill Road ACES school in North Haven.

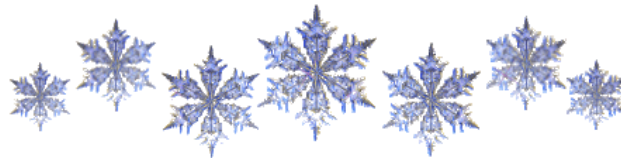


The Class of 2019 kicks off PA week at QU

Community service is an important part of our curriculum at Quinnipiac, and we take pride in serving our community in meaningful ways. We actively participate in programs such as midnight run and foot clinics at the New Haven men's homeless shelter, clinics held by the National Kidney Foundation, volunteering as staff at the Hartford marathon, and walks hosted by the National Kidney and National Liver Foundations.

Lastly, interviews are complete for the Quinnipiac University Physician Assistant Class of 2020. The PA faculty and students are looking forward to welcoming the class of 2020 next May!

For future events to mark your calendar, our annual Cow Chip Bingo event will be on April 21st, 2018, which students are diligently planning and hoping for a successful day!



ADVANCES IN PA EDUCATION THROUGH SIMULATION LABS

by Magdalena Lukaszewicz, PA-C and Emily Brook PA-S

This year at Quinnipiac University, we have incorporated an innovative medical simulation and clinical decision making course, with interprofessional aspects, into the graduate PA curriculum. Considering PAs are integral members of the healthcare team, it is essential to maintain high quality education and training programs. The definition of quality education evolves over time and therefore, new tools and techniques must be utilized in education; simulation is a tool that complements medical education.

The new simulation course is modeled according to the strict guidelines for high quality curriculum development as established by the ARC-PA, the accrediting body for PA education. Its design allows students to simulate the role of a PA in various practice settings. This course enables students to practice histories and physical exams as well as to develop a differential diagnosis that leads to a diagnosis through ordering and interpreting labs and diagnostic studies. Further, students can prescribe pharmacotherapies and treat simulated patients, therefore, solidifying knowledge of pharmaceutical and other treatment therapies, and provide counseling and education to patients with different diagnoses. In our program, the students even have access to an electronic health record system, OmniMD, therefore providing experience with navigating through complex health records and using the system to write notes or practice with ICD-10 coding.

From the student perspective, this course has been a highlight of our fall semester. It gives us an opportunity to take what we have learned in the classroom and apply it to cases designed to test our knowledge. For students in the didactic year, it is a transition to apply classroom knowledge to a clinical setting, from first contact with the patient, to dosing and prescribing medications, and finally counseling the patient on the care we provided and recommendations for future wellness. This course has allowed us to start thinking like clinicians early on in our education, and we look forward to more simulation cases in the Spring and are excited to see this course continue for future PA classes.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

by Linda Kowalski, The Kowalski Group

It is very likely the issue will come up in the 2018 Legislative Session. Physician Assistants are a mandated service in all state-regulated individual and group health plans in Connecticut, and we want to keep it that way. The issue of Essential Health Benefits and your state coverage mandate needs to be a priority for ConnAPA in the next year.

The 2017 Legislative Session continued to recognize the benefits of effective patient care by Physician Assistants:

- PA Practice Option in Telemedicine: We are pleased to report that no legislation was enacted this year that would revise the rules over who can provide services through the Telemedicine law. As you know, PA's are specifically referenced in statute as being licensed providers who can provide this emerging service and treatment option. There has been discussion of reducing the number of professions who are guaranteed participation as Telemedicine providers; however, we have successfully pushed back on that for now.
- PA on Psychiatric Workforce Group: Legislation was enacted (HB 7222, Public Act 17-146) that will create a statutory working group to review the workforce shortage in the field of psychiatry. As you know, many individuals complain about how difficult it can be to find a licensed professional in this field in the state. The task force membership is identified in the bill and will include a Physician Assistant who works under the supervision of an MD in the psychiatric field. ConnAPA identified an appropriate candidate, and we have forwarded the recommendation to the appointing authority.
- Saline Flush/PA Orders: Legislation was passed (HB 7174, Public Act 17-234) that permits a Physician Assistant to give orders for a peripheral/IV with pre-packaged normal saline performed by a phlebotomist. The bill's sponsors overcame the opposition of the nursing lobby to make the statutory change. PA's who work in appropriate settings can take advantage of this new authority.
- Opioids: the 2017 Legislative Session took action, as they have in recent years, to combat the opioid addiction crisis. This year's legislation, House Bill 7052, Public Act 17-131, was proposed by Governor Malloy and contained dozens of new provisions that seek to tighten prescribing and give patients alternatives to controlled substances, especially for chronic pain. Showing that physician assistants make responsible prescribing can be a priority for ConnAPA over the next year as additional opioid legislation is sure to be introduced in the 2018 Legislative Session.

Finally, and most importantly, your legislative team has been working to develop new legislation for the 2018 Legislative Session that introduces the idea of a collaborative relationship between Physician Assistants and Medical Doctors. Much of the proposal had been submitted over the summer as part of the Department of Public Health's Scope of Process Committee Review process. Unfortunately, the proposal was not selected by the Commissioner of Public Health; however, we can still pursue the issue through legislation.

Other issues are likely to come up for debate that will be of interest to ConnAPA in the 2018 Legislative Session. We expect that there could be another debate over the definition of surgery proposal. ConnAPA's position on the issue has been that any such legislation should not interfere with current Physician Assistant work and practices. We also expect to see more legislation on the issue of transparency with hospital systems and electronic medical records. Issues related to "surprise" or balanced billings could also be taken up. We expect most of our issues will fall within the Public Health Committee as well as the Insurance and Real Estate Committee.

As always, thank you for the good work that you do for your patients and communities. Your legislative team is looking forward to the 2018 Legislative Session with an aggressive agenda. We will be in touch with you to ask for your help in contacting your local legislators about our issues. We have seen time and time again how these personal contacts really work. We encourage ConnAPA members to contact their local legislators regarding their priority legislation as we work with the ConnAPA Legislative Committee on messaging.

On behalf of all of us at The Kowalski Group, I want to wish you a successful New Year and hope that you are enjoying the holiday season.



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