



# News

*The News of Pennsylvania Society of Physician Assistants*

## Legislative Update



*By Katie Kugler, PA-C and Mark DeSantis, PA-C, Governmental Affairs Committee Co-Chairs*

This past November elections were mid-term elections, meaning that they are in the middle of the current president's term. During these elections most often the party of the incumbent president loses seats in the US House and Senate and often the majority shifts to the other party. This is a national political norm, but it holds true for states also and often has a mirror impact in Pennsylvania. As you know Pennsylvania broke this tradition and elected Josh Shapiro to the Governor's Office by a comfortable margin. Prior to this recent election, the Pennsylvania Senate and House had a Republican majority and the results of this year's vote show that the State Senate has remained in Republican control with a 28-22 advantage, while control of the State House is too close to call as two districts are still too close to call at the writing of this article. If one of those races is won by a Democrat, the State House will have a Democratic majority for the first time since 2009.

Because of the recent Pennsylvania election, there are between 40-50 new House members and 7 new Senators in Pennsylvania which is a huge turnover of legislators. With these seat changes, it provides us a great opportunity to connect with all of the new, as well as the veteran legislators to build relationships and educate them about the excellent healthcare impact PAs make in Pennsylvania. The best way to keep moving legislation in Pennsylvania in a positive direction for PAs is to build these relationships with legislators, then when a legislative issue that impacts PAs comes in front of them, they will remember you! Also importantly, they now have someone to reach out to as a resource for any legislation that could impact PAs; someone who is a PA.

One of the ways that the PSPA Governmental Affairs committee is planning to build these relationships is by planning and hosting PA Hill Days in April 2023 (exact date to be set once the legislative calendar is set at the end of 2022). During this two day event, we hope to meet with as many

of the new and returning members as we possibly can, but how many we reach depends on all of you joining us for this event. I hope that every one of you practicing or retired PAs and PA students alike will make time in your busy schedule to participate, let's flood the Capitol and make everyone sit up and take notice of us as PAs. This will be an amazingly impactful way that you can not only meet and build relationships with your legislator but also an opportunity to join with your fellow PAs united in a common goal clad in your white coat and armed with amazing personal stories of how you as a PA have made a difference in your patients' lives!

Stay tuned to Constant Contact and the Spring Newsletter for the official date and further details for PA Hill Days 2023, we hope to see all of you there!

### Table of Contents

Legislative Update .....	1
President's Message .....	2
Physician Fee Schedule .....	3-4
In Honor of Nonna .....	4,13,15
Fall 2022 Conference .....	5-7, 11-12, 14, 16-17
Award Winners .....	8-11
Student Affairs .....	22
Leadership Academy .....	23
History .....	24-25
Membership Spotlight.....	26
PERSAD Center.....	27, 30
Volunteer Opportunities.....	31

# President Elect's Message

I recently had a meeting with Jackie Borst who is serving her second term as PSPA President. As we were talking about my role as President Elect and how I could help out, we thought it would be fun if I stepped in to write the President's Message for this issue of PSPA News since I had some recent experiences to share.

I had been practicing in SNFs providing post acute care and long term care since I started as a PA over 10 years ago; however, I decided to make a change and joined a new Emergency Department Observation Unit here in Williamsport. Over the end of the Summer, I had a chance to orient with several PAs, and noticed some common themes I thought I would share.

First, I noticed how hungry most PAs are for autonomy. Many of us experienced PAs have the benefit of working mainly on our own, but when orienting I noticed just how much other PAs valued the experience of working through medical decision making to the extent of their scope of practice, experience and knowledge. Likewise, I was so impressed with the competence I observed of my PA colleagues. It gave me pride to see these PAs at different levels of experience and from different PA programs all performing at a high level. I have renewed confidence that our model of education and training makes us excellent health care providers who must continue to optimize our roles in health care. PSPA's advocacy is obviously essential to those needed changes and optimizations.

One of my gripes with my former practice setting was how isolated I was from other PAs. Being in a hospital environment now, I have had the chance to meet face-to-face with many of the PAs I have only seen notes from or talked to on the phone. When I talked with them, I became acutely aware of how important our connections are to one another whether that be through advocacy, education, precepting, or networking. We have a strong PA community, but PSPA can continue to help enhance those connections.

During the transition between my practice areas, there was a gap of several weeks when I was not personally performing patient visits. What struck me most on resuming my work was just how grateful patients are for our services. It is sometimes easy to lose track of what matters most in the day-to-day, but when I became reengaged it was plain to see just how essential PAs are to our patients and health care teams.

Lastly, I want to write a little about our annual conference. If you were able to join us in Pittsburgh, I hope you found it as rejuvenating as I did. In particular, the student challenge bowl was a highlight for me. PSPA's support of the students, their exemplary performance, their enthusiasm, and the camaraderie of everyone involved was an inspiring and impressive experience for me. It reminded me just how bright the future is for our profession.

With gratitude and optimism,  
Rob Ross, PSPA President Elect



Rob Ross, PSPA President Elect

# What PAs Should Know About the 2023 Physician Fee Schedule Rule

## CMS Postpones Major Change to Split/Shared Visit Billing Rules

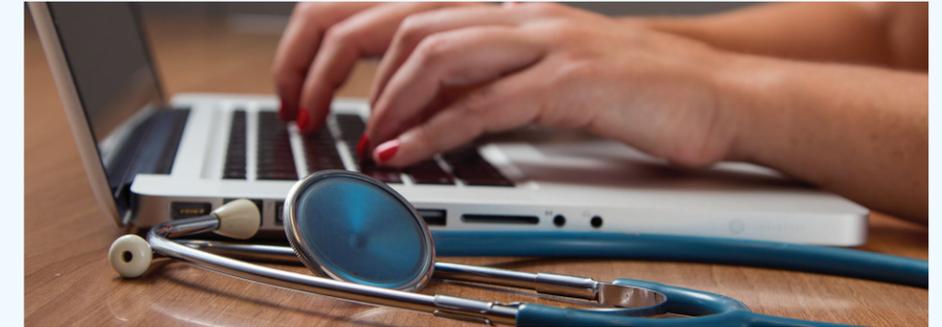
By Michael Powe,  
Vice President, Reimbursement  
& Professional Advocacy  
November 10, 2022

On November 2, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency that oversees the Medicare program, released the 2023 Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) final rule. The rule updates numerous Medicare coverage and payment policies that impact PAs, physicians, and other health professionals. Some of the key provisions of the rule of importance to the PA profession are highlighted below and will take effect on January 1, 2023..

### Split/Shared Visit Billing

Medicare's split (or shared) billing policy will remain unchanged for 2023. To use this optional billing mechanism, a "substantive portion" of care must be performed by a physician which will continue to be defined (for non-time-based services) as one of the following: history, physical exam, or medical decision-making (MDM), or more than half of the total combined time spent on the service by a PA and a physician. For time-based services like discharge day management and critical care, the substantive portion can only be determined based on more than half of the total time.

CMS proposes to make time the only determinant in 2024. AAPA is not in favor of this change and will advocate for CMS making the 2023 policy (either history, exam, or MDM, or time) permanent.



Other requirements must be met for a physician to bill a service as split (or shared) under their name/National Provider Identifier Standard (NPI), and these include the following:

- The physician and PA (or NP) must work for the same group.
- The physician and PA (or NP) must provide their part of the service on the same calendar day.
- The services must be performed in a hospital, facility, or hospital outpatient office.
- The physician must sign and date the medical record, and the claim must be submitted with an FS modifier.

### PA Supervision of Behavioral Health Professionals

Demand for behavioral health services is increasing while most projections indicate the size of the behavioral health workforce is shrinking. In an effort to increase beneficiary access to behavioral health services, the final PFS rule specifies that behavioral health services provided by licensed professional counselors (LPCs) and licensed marriage and family therapists (LMFTs) can be provided under the general supervision of a PA, physician, or other non-physician health professional, as opposed to under the direct supervision.

Consequently, PAs would no longer be required to be physically on site (direct supervision), when supervising LPCs or LMFTs. Instead, PAs could be available by electronic means via cell phone, for example, known under Medicare as general supervision. CMS believes this policy change will provide increased flexibility regarding how health professionals can be more efficiently utilized to meet behavioral health access demands.

### Changes to Hospital E/M Documentation

Significant changes to evaluation and management (E/M) coding and documentation for hospital inpatient, hospital observation, emergency department, and other services will go into effect in January. Like office/outpatient E/M visit coding, a medically appropriate history and/or examination will be required, but the history and physical exam will no longer be used to select the visit level. The level of visit selected for hospital inpatient and observation services will be based on MDM or total time personally spent by the billing practitioner performing the service. For emergency department services, MDM will be the only determinant to select the visit level.

*continued on page 4*



## 2023 Physician Fee Schedule Rule

from page 3

MDM includes establishing diagnoses, assessing the status of a condition, and/or selecting a management option. Four levels of MDM will be recognized and determined by three elements: the number and complexity of problem(s) that are addressed during the encounter, the amount and/or complexity of data to be reviewed and analyzed, and the risk of complications and/or morbidity or mortality of patient management. Time will include many patient-facing and non-patient-facing activities performed by the billing practitioner(s) on the day of the service and not separately payable. For a complete list of time-based qualifying activities and determinants of MDM, see CPT® Evaluation and Management (E/M) Code and Guideline Changes.

### Nursing Facility Billing

Upon entering a nursing facility, patients are required to undergo an initial comprehensive visit, which must be conducted by a physician. Often, patients need medical care before they can be seen by the physician for the initial

comprehensive visit. When this occurs, there can be confusion as to whether and how to bill for a medical service that occurs before the initial comprehensive visit.

The final rule clarifies that PAs may bill an appropriate initial nursing facility or subsequent nursing facility care code, even if the services are provided before the initial comprehensive assessment is performed. This policy clarification will allow medically necessary care to be provided when needed without confusion about whether a visit is billable prior to the initial comprehensive visit.

### ACO Update

Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) and networks of health professionals under the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) seek to improve quality and reduce costs by enhanced coordination of care and cooperation among health professionals. The final PFS rule implements several significant changes to the MSSP to encourage greater participation in ACOs. Some of the changes proposed include providing advanced payments to

certain new or low-revenue ACOs that could help address social needs, giving smaller ACOs more time to transition to contractual arrangements with the potential for financial risk and creating a health equity adjustment for the performance category to reduce penalty to ACOs caring for an underserved population. There were also programmatic policy changes made to help reduce the administrative burdens of ACOs.

### Medicare Conversion Factor Cuts

The 2023 conversion factor is scheduled to be reduced by 4.47%, from \$34.61 to \$33.06 for 2023. This payment reduction is primarily due to the expiration of the 3% payment increase provided by Congress in 2022 and budget neutrality adjustments to E/M Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes, as required by law. AAPA is working in coordination with physician medical societies and other health professional groups advocating for Congress to intervene and eliminate the projected payment cuts.

For additional information contact AAPA's Reimbursement Team at [Reimbursementteam@aapa.org](mailto:Reimbursementteam@aapa.org).

## In Honor of Nonna

By Bryan Bilbao, PA-C PSPA  
Fellow Health Disparity  
Committee Contest Winner

As a bilingual first generation American with Uruguayan heritage, healthcare disparities were unfortunately always evident, especially with my grandparents and parents. My Nonna was a very sick woman and life was never the best to her, but I noticed whenever I took her to appointments or during hospital stays, providers would kind of "brush her off" or not give her the respectable healthcare she deserved because she did not speak English.

I celebrated my 25th birthday in the Emergency Room with her, where she would go on to pass away for medical complications (2) days later in the ICU. I was hurt. I was depressed. I was anxious. (2) weeks later I was about to begin the difficult and treacherous journey of PA school, especially didactic year.

One of our professors, Heather Dorman, on the first day of classes said that when the going got tough, always dangle your "why" in front of you. That is what I did and still currently do every single day in regard to my why, my Nonna, Italia Gallo

Cusati. That same professor, Heather Dorman, then challenged us over the summer session for our medical decision making class to make a project addressing any healthcare disparity and bringing it to light and what we can do to address them. She gave our class full reign to do it in any format we wanted - a PowerPoint presentation, drawing artwork for flyers, creating social media pages, making a cookbook, etc.

At this point I was floored with residual anger and grief by how the

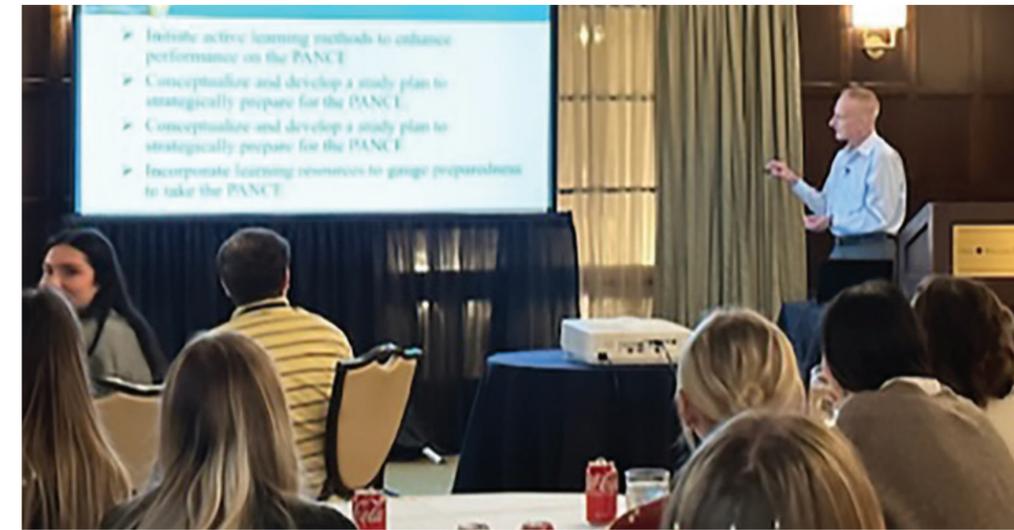
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## Thanks for a Great Conference!

Dan Barker, PA-C  
Board Oversight for Conference  
Committee, Chair Technology  
and Co-Chair Social Media  
Committees

I hope you all had as great of a time as I did at the 2022 CME Conference! We had a great 3.5 days of education, networking, fun, sight seeing, and planning for the future while in Pittsburgh. Conference week kicked off first on Tuesday with the Board of Directors meeting. Although the name says "Board of Directors," this meeting is open to every PSPA member, and everyone is encouraged to attend if they can! We even stream the meeting for those who cannot attend in person! The discussions are always open, and views and opinions from everyone are always entertained. The board meeting is held every quarter, with our next one happening in the beginning of February in Hershey, PA.

The lectures on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday truly highlighted the depth and breadth of the knowledge of our PAs in PA. Out of all the events, only 3 of our speakers were physicians, while the rest were all PAs. The PSPA is proud of the talents, knowledge, and experience that we have here! Did you know we also had a handful of attendees from neighboring states as well? Our Silent Auction and PAC reception on Thursday night had a great turnout, with \$10,000 raised for our PAC! Students battled it out on Friday night, with Chatham reigning supreme at the end of the night as our Challenge Bowl winner! Congratulations to our second place team, DeSales, third place, Duquesne, and all the other schools that participated (University of Pittsburgh, Penn College, Slippery Rock, Seton Hill, Mercyhurst, Thomas Jefferson, and Drexel)!



Our 2022 conference also was a repeat hybrid approach, as this year we had a consistent 100 participants attending from their homes via our virtual platform. All live attendees also have the same virtual access, and the platform with recordings of all the lectures, handouts, and exhibits are available until April 15, 2023. Take advantage of this ability so you can review the lectures again in case you missed any, want to clarify some things, or just want to show support for the speaker! You can access the virtual portal via the link provided in your registration e-mail.

All attendees will receive their CME certificates by late November via e-mail. For additional CME claimed after the event, you will need to contact [confreg@pspa.net](mailto:confreg@pspa.net) to request your updated certificate.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the three most essential staff to our conference every year. These three ladies worked (literally) countless hours working to make this conference the best that it could, and without their work, nothing would have been able to be accomplished. Thank you to Natalie Norris, our conference planner; Susan DeSantis,

PSPA Board Administrator and knower of everything, and Theresa Braffet, who handles all registrations / tickets / paperwork.

I would also like to recognize all of our Committee Chairs, workshop coordinators, lecture presenters, poster makers, and volunteers. Thank you to the Omni William Penn for some of the best food our conference has had! Perhaps most important of all, thank you to all of you, the attendees, for another great year.

Next year's conference is going to be a little unique! Stay tuned for more information in the coming months, as we travel to Hershey, PA, for the first time for our conference. Next year's dates are a little later, November 29 – December 2, 2023. This is due to the availability of the Hershey Lodge to accommodate us. If you're interested in helping in any aspect of the conference (education planning, speaking, workshops, posters, facility, technology, anything at all), please contact the [pspa@pspa.net](mailto:pspa@pspa.net) to ask about how to get started. We can always use more help and ideas both before, during, and after the conference!



Pictured: Patrice Farguharson, PA-S, Michel Statler, Kara Carathers, Linda Sekhon, Rosa Fannie, PA-C, Jackie Borst, PA-C

## Education Forum

The PSPA Conference in Pittsburgh this year welcomed the Physician Assistant Education Association again! Speakers, Kara Caruthers MSPAS, PA-C, PAEA President, Linda Sekhon DHSc, PA-C, PAEA President Elect, and Michel Statler, MLA, PA-C, PAEA Past President offered an engaging and interactive workshop on preceptor recruitment and retention workshop, an issue for any PA Program. The Workshop offered role play scenarios which opened up discussion about these issues in Pennsylvania. Educators, preceptors, and future educators were able to learn new strategies to promote the recruitment and retention of preceptors, have an honest and open discussion about the challenges of generational differences between learners and preceptors, and explore methods of providing formative feedback to students. The PSPA is proud to continue their relationship with the PAEA.



## Student Forum

The PSPA Student Forum was a full house! Students came out in person and virtually to participate in sessions from Patrick Heagey MPAS, PA-C, Scott Massey PhD, PA-C, and Kathryn Reed MS, PA-C, EMT-P, RYT. Topics included a discussion about stress and burnout while in PA school, proven strategies on passing the PANCE, and diversity, equity, and inclusion in PA education. Students also took some time to enjoy some pizza and play PA trivia in order to win some fun prizes. Both first and second year students came together from 11 PA Programs from across Pennsylvania. The Student and Faculty Affairs Committee look forward to utilizing feedback from participants to continue to provide discussion about hot topics in PA education and in PA practice.



## Silent Auction

By Cara Bennett, PA-C and Mary Hinish, PA-C, PAC Co-Chairs

Thank you to all who attended the Welcome Party and Silent Auction in Pittsburgh! It was a night full of fun, food and friends! As we have learned through the past couple of years, things don't always go as planned. We had a band on the docket but due to the \*vid, we had to scramble and found a great DJ to fill in at the last minute. The last minute change did not disrupt the fun!

The history of the great city of Pittsburgh was on display, as the many historical features of the city were noted on tables throughout the room. Again beautiful and fun items were donated this year for members to bid on. We had both members in attendance and several members remotely bidding on items. The online bidding platform has opened up opportunities for members who were not in attendance in person to participate.

The hot items of the night were the autographed, authenticated Hines Ward jersey and the many wine baskets (who would have thought?) . The live auction featured a fresh water pearl necklace, bracelet and earrings. For a second year in a row, John Ashton was the big winner of the jewelry (and his wife is very happy!).

Not everyone had to spend money to be a winner. Three door prizes were handed out to the folks who stayed around to party. The first door prize was a Larq water bottle, won by Alexa Arbogast, PA-S. Melissa Medsger PA-C, will be enjoying a robot vacuum. The grand prize of \$250 and a large bottle of Heinz Ketchup was won by Christopher Tobias, PA-C.

It was a great party, but the reason we were there was to raise money for our Political Action Committee. And did we succeed!!!! Our members raised close to \$11,000 to continue to advance the practice of Physician Assistants in Pennsylvania!

Thank you to all who came, enjoyed, and spent money! We are looking forward to next year in Hershey, PA!



### Student Forum winners of Rosh Review Qbanks

- Jordyn Davidson from Thomas Jefferson University
- Joy Starr from Duquesne University
- Madelyn Tiu from Duquesne University

### Thank you and shout out to the DEI student and faculty facilitators:

- Beverley Zuccarello, MPAS, PA-C, Temple University, Principal Faculty at Lewis Katz School of Medicine
- Lena Ward, MHS, PA-C Clinical Instructor Drexel University
- Kristin D'Acunto, MPA, PA-C Duquesne University, Department Chair and Assistant Professor

### Student Facilitators:

- Deionte Gray, PA-S, Didactic Year Student, University of Pittsburgh
- Patrice Farquharson, PA-S, MPH, PSPA Student Director at Large, Clinical Year Student, Drexel University
- Courtney Lee, PA-S PSPA Student Director at Large, Clinical Year Student, Drexel University

# 2022 Award Winners Shine!



Pictured: Rachael Fulreader - Drexel University, Meghan Primus - DeSales University, Quyen Tran - Drexel University

## Nathaniel Alston Student Scholarship Winners

*By Helen Hiserman, PA-C, Awards Committee Co-Chair*

Every year it is a pleasure to announce three winners for the Nathaniel Alston Student Scholarship Awards. These are Physician Assistant students that let PSPA know of their challenges in their personal encounters with patients in the medical community as well as ethical and moral decisions they are confronted with. 20 students took advantage of submitting applications this year including students from DeSales, Drexel, King's, Lock Haven, Marywood, Mercyhurst, Penn College of Technology, Seton Hill, Slippery Rock, St. Francis, University of Pittsburgh and University of Sciences PA programs. Rachael Fulreader from Drexel University, shared a simulated experience encounter with an elderly male for a f/u HIV visit. She realized she never inquired about the gentleman's sexual history due to what has been programmed in us through media, etc. to not expect this age group to be sexually active. She found this encounter to wake her up to how easily bias can creep into patient encounters, and to make a serious effort to avoid its detrimental influence on the future care of her patients. Meghan Primus from DeSales University shared a shadowing experience with a Trauma Team Physician Assistant and was given a wonderful

example of how this PA showed true, compassionate care in caring for a patient in their last moments of life. She was profoundly touched in learning what is genuine care in the midst of suffering and grief.

Quyen Tran from Drexel University found that really listening to a patient in the ER regarding their illness, brought to light an awareness of how a medical illness may stem from loss of a loved one. We are grateful and proud of our student winners and congratulate them for their deep insights into patient care that will guide them in their future careers as Physician Assistants.



Pictured: Rosa Fannie, PA-C, Mark DeSantis, PA-C, Amy L. Haller, MBA, MPAS, PA-C

## PA Educator of the Year

*By Helen Hiserman, PA-C, Awards Committee Co-Chair*

University of Pittsburgh consistently presents to us stellar faculty who take teaching seriously and provide for the students a comprehensive PA program preparing them for work as Physician Assistants. This year's award, presented to Mrs. Rosa Fannie, PA-C, exemplifies another remarkable teacher who stands out not only as a well-respected preceptor in the field of Obstetrics and Gynecology, but a teacher who uses her clinical skills to advance education of PA students in the class room. Rosa has received the Distinguished Faculty Award for PA Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. She joined the faculty full time in 2018 and is lead instructor for the Introduction to the PA Profession course. Here she provides significant manual and procedural skills for the students to make them more capable in settings across the spectrum of PA careers. She is faculty advisor for the Pittsburgh PA Student Society and has led multiple initiatives and activities within the organization, including arranging the PSPA Challenge Bowl teams. Per the program director, Rosa is a leader in the field of student education, having great attention to detail and proactive in her approach to optimize student welfare of their education. She is supportive and caring instructor, and has great skills in addressing difficult situations in an orderly, well-orchestrated manner. Rosa is currently Director of Clinical Education for the University of Pittsburgh PA Studies Program, managing 60

students who are navigating clinical rotations. She excelled in adapting to the constant fluctuation of clinical access right before and during the pandemic, supporting students through the various changes that needed to take place. She advises a dozen didactic students and juggles more than 100 clinical site preceptors. She is a welcoming ear for many students with an acute problem solving mind and a warm heart to make all difficult situations or experiences a good learning lesson. She is known as the glue that holds the faculty together, often checking in with the team and offering help and support when needed. We applaud Rosa for a job well done and congratulate her for her sincere dedication in teaching and outstanding contribution to Physician Assistant education.

## PA of the Year

By Helen Hiserman, PA-C, Awards Committee Co-Chair

40 letters were received by the Awards Committee for Amy Haller, PA-C's nomination as PA of the Year! This has been the most recognition that we have received for one person in my 10 years as Awards Chair. It is no surprise, though, since Amy Haller has accomplished so much in the few years she has been a certified Physician Assistant. From the time she completed PA school at Duquesne University earning her BA and Master of Physician Assistant Studies to attending Yale University receiving her Surgical PA certification, then completing her Health Care Administration degree from Chatham University, she has been in full gear to advance the PA profession in our state and across the country. She has been a preceptor for over 12 years in various clinical settings and has mentored hundreds of students to help foster caring, compassionate and competent current and future practitioners. Under her tutelage, the UPMC Preceptor Academy has grown hosting an educational forum and providing resources for both preceptors, students and established Advance Practice Provider liaisons to local universities and colleges. She spent 9 years as a PA at a Minimally Invasive Bariatric and General Surgery Department and created a practice standard for gastric band adjustment providing staff training for this procedure. She pursued educating surgical departments on how to utilize PAs to the maximum developing UPMC's Surgical Residency Program for Advanced Practice Providers, and was director for many years. Many students mentored by her clinical expertise have found themselves better practitioners because of her guidance and teaching. As for mentoring, she established a Mentor Me program within UPMC connecting APPs across a 40 hospital system. This pairs new PAs and APRNs with mentors to help them be most successful in their new role at UPMC. She continues to be clinically active at 3 different hospitals through UPMC. With her academic background she has been an adjunct faculty member for the University of Pittsburgh and Duquesne University. In her spare time, she worked with an emergency medicine PA and developed and implemented an Emergency Medicine Postgraduate Fellowship Program. She is the backbone of continuing education and professional development of PAs at UPMC. She has developed multiple educational opportunities including virtual and in person CME and grand rounds, sharing her wealth of knowledge to advance clinical and leadership skills for PAs in all areas of work. She is currently the Clinical Project Director at UPMC's office of Advanced Practice Providers, and recently developed a project with University of Pittsburgh called Advance Practice Provider Leadership Certificate Course which supports professional, educational and operational needs of more than 3000 PAs and APRNs. This course has gained national recognition, and of course, contributes and will contribute immensely to ensure a bright future for the PA profession. Amy is a mover, a shaker, a motivator and forges a new future for the next generation of Advanced Practice Providers. We must not forget to mention her influence in the local community where she donates her treasure and talent as a volunteer to numerous groups, and contributes to PSPA's Leadership and Governmental Affairs Committees.

Such dedication and exemplary service to the PA profession is recognized as we honor her and extend heartfelt congratulations for advocating for PAs.

## Letter of Gratitude

Amy L. Haller,  
MBA, MPAS, PA-C

"It was a humbling honor to receive the 2022 PSPA Physician Assistant of the Year Award. When I reflect on the last 14 years serving as a PA I am filled with so much gratitude: for those patients that trusted me with their care, for the mentors that shared their time, for the leaders in the profession paving the way for the future, for the relationships built with colleagues, and most importantly for my family who has provided me unconditional love and support. This award is a symbol of my ongoing passion for the advancement and advocacy of the PA Profession. I am looking forward to what the next decade of my PA career shall bring."

## JAANUU

PSPA is announcing our newest member benefit:

**25% off  
Jaanuu Scrubs  
and Apparel!**

Members enjoy a 25% discount of Jaanuu scrubs AND have the option of personalizing them when ordering through the PSPA portal.

Visit <https://www.jaanuu.com/> to check out apparel or <https://partners.jaanuu.com>

access-partner using code: **pspa** to get access!

## Michael Habeck Lifetime Achievement Award

By Helen Hiserman, PA-C, Awards Committee Co-Chair

Mark DeSantis, PA-C truly embodies this award as he has provided sustained, exceptional service and leadership to the Pennsylvania Society of Physician Assistants along with contributing to the advancement of the PA profession. He has worked tirelessly for the PA profession in many different roles dating back to 1993 being a Region 1 Representative, and then serving as an AAPA's House of Delegates, PSPA's Board of Director and was the 10th President of PSPA from 1997-1999. He started a push for better legislation for PAs back in 1997 as Chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee and has not stopped since. In 2000 he was honored with the Outstanding Leadership Award by PSPA. His advocacy for PAs has been steady, reliable, focused and consistent. He never vies for the spotlight, but when necessary he is never afraid to speak up for PAs. He has a walking dictionary knowledge of the current PA regulations and pressing legislative issues for PAs in Pennsylvania. He is always one step ahead, anticipating possible problems or new issues that need addressing before they even happen. He keeps his watchful eye on the big picture in legislation for PAs never seeming to be defeated but pushes through hopeless scenarios that often work out for our advantage. In the last four years his persistent push for better legislation for PAs has been successful with significant updates to the Practice Act, to modernize the PA profession in our state. PAs across our state continue to benefit from Mark's tireless efforts at the helm. Remember, when you see a patient on your own without the doctor having to then see them, thank Mark. When you write your next prescription, thank Mark. When a patient requests to see you instead of the doctor and it happens, thank Mark. When you review a lab or x-ray you ordered that came back in your name, thank Mark. When you order Durable Medical Equipment,

## Observations of Conference 2022 by PSPA Student Director at Large Patrice Farquharson

### Student Forum

- Advocacy is a marathon not a sprint; As students shared during the Student Forum discussion, its important to speak up as your voice has the power to develop a better PA school curriculum and/or rotation experience for future students
- Passing EORs and PANCE when using Dr. Maseys tips is possible! Just requires a little bit of planning and a lot of carefully orchestrated practice questions!
- Just because burnout is a common part of PA school and PA practice, doesn't mean it can't be prevented and managed.

### General conference

- While conferences can typically feel very large and impersonal, PSPA felt more like a community which was nice as a new attendee.
- I enjoyed the lectures from experts across the state, it was very helpful as I am starting on rotations
- Waking up early to get a good seat (preferably next to someone new!) and beat the breakfast line is highly encouraged!
- Challenge Bowl displayed fierce competitions, but in the end everyone was able to learn and test their knowledge with the questions being asked

thank Mark. When you work at a satellite office without having a doctor on-site, thank Mark. When you give a nurse an order and they execute it, thank Mark. When you work with a different doctor each day instead of only one, thank Mark. When you sign the next driver's exam form, thank Mark. When you sign a note for a student to use a meter-dose inhaler at school, thank Mark. When you order Physical Therapy, thank Mark. When you prescribe a controlled substance, thank Mark. When you sign and certify a death certificate, thank Mark. We honor Mark DeSantis for his tenacity and continuous work for our profession, so very grateful for his dedication, many trips to Harrisburg, late night meetings, time away from family and headaches and heartaches he has endured for the PAs in Pennsylvania. Congratulations Mark to a job continuing to be well done and sincere appreciation in helping the PA profession move forward!

- The exhibit hall is a great place to start when seeking a job as a new grad, switching jobs and/or taking time to learn about the innovative resources available. If you did not get to attend this year, be sure to add that to your agenda for next years conference!

### Education Forum

- As the only student in the room, I enjoyed hearing from various stakeholders from PAEA current, past and future presidents, practicing PAs, and faculty. It provided insight to the innerworkings of the clinical experience that I would otherwise not have been privy to.

## Charity wrap up 2022

By Rebecca Baldwin, PA-C, Public Education and Relations Committee Co-Chair

Persad Center was the PSPA Annual Charity for 2022. They are focused on improving the well-being of the LGBTQ+ communities and HIV/AIDS communities through outreach, prevention, counseling, and training services. We had an educational and emotional presentation by the CEO of Persad Center, Marty Healey, at the membership luncheon during the conference.

Throughout the conference, the donation room filled with an impressive amount of items - including hundreds of cans of food, over 25 lbs of rice, a multitude of hygiene & cleaning products, as well as a variety of clothing items including a giant box of socks. The PA Programs

participating in the Challenge Bowl did a fantastic job collecting items to donate. Special thank you to Mercyhurst University PA Program for donating the largest quantity of items. When the Persad Center representatives saw the room full of donated items, they were stunned! They called ahead to their kitchen to prepare the team for the large quantity of food that would be arriving that night. They reported filling 3.5 cars with the items. As a whole, we put together a monetary donation of over \$5000 to Persad Center. Shout out to DeSales University who astoundingly contributed over \$700! Thank you to all students, PAs, and others who donated to Persad Center. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

*If you have ideas for a charity in the Hershey area, please email [rebecca.baldwin18@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.baldwin18@gmail.com).*

## Medical Challenge Bowl 2022

By Rebecca Baldwin, PA-C, Challenge Bowl Coordinator

The PSPA Annual Student Challenge Bowl was a hit this year at the conference! The evening began with good food and great company for dinner. There were 10 participating PA Programs and over 200 attendees. In addition to the competing team members, there were many supporting PA classmates, family members, friends, and conference attendees who joined for an evening of rapid fire medical trivia (and Rob Emery reciting Lizzo lyrics). The schools who competed were Chatham University, DeSales University, Drexel University, Duquesne University, Mercyhurst University, Pennsylvania College of Technology, Seton Hill University, Slippery Rock University, Thomas Jefferson University - Center City Campus, and University of Pittsburgh. We had ten-minute competition rounds in a single-elimination tournament. Several rounds were suspenseful and very close at the conclusion of the 10 minutes. After hard-fought rounds, Chatham University PA Program ran away with first place for the evening after competing with DeSales who earned a second place finish. Duquesne won an exciting third place competition. Many thanks to the Challenge Bowl volunteers who made the evening possible including Rob Emery (moderator), Jen Campbell (judge), Marcy Hinish (judge), John Ashton (judge), Katie Kugler (scorekeeper), DeAnn Hansum (scorekeeper), Natalie Schwer (timekeeper and buzzer operator), and our numerous room monitors & door-prize distributors. At the end of the evening, the volunteers named the University of Pittsburgh as the Spirit Award winners due to their positive energy throughout the duration of the evening. The host city charity, Persad Center, thanked the students for their generous donations and commented that the students were impressive in their knowledge. There were door prizes and raffles drawn throughout the evening. We also celebrated our student award winners for this year, as selected by the Health Disparity Committee and Awards Committee. It was a fun evening full of spirited competition and quick buzzing. We hope to see all of the teams return next year, hopefully to face some new competition at the 2023 Challenge Bowl in Hershey.

## Nonna from page 4

healthcare system seemed to let my Nonna “go” because of not speaking English. My fiancée, Alyvia Guariglia, was with me and supported me throughout this whole journey of PA school, always supporting me and never leaving my side. When I told her I wanted to make a project in honor of my late Nonna, she loved the idea and concept and helped me spring into action by how excited the idea made her!

As I thought about how my Nonna was treated, I started wondering how other people in the community that

strayed off from being society’s status quo of being “normal” felt in regard to healthcare. I was talking about people of the BIPOC community, members in the LGBTQIA+ community, people with disabilities, those that speak different languages or come from different cultures/ backgrounds, etc. I wanted to see if anyone along these lines felt the unfortunate struggle and pain that my late Nonna did. I put out a quick post across social media platforms just asking in general if anyone has ever felt lackluster healthcare

due to their own background. By my bewilderment, I believe it was maybe less than 2 hours, I had over 10 responses of stories that people themselves or family members went through with the healthcare system. I realized that me speaking on behalf of my Nonna wasn’t enough... I needed to give these disparities and these specific people a platform and a stage, so I conducted and recorded interviews and asked them to tell their side and their story and what they want us, current and future healthcare providers, to know and do

*continued on page 15*



## 2022 Thomas J. Lemley Award Winners

The PSPA Health Disparities committee would like to give a special shout-out to the 2022 Thomas J. Lemley Health Disparity Award winners. Every year, a different topic is chosen for PA students and fellows to discuss via essay, PowerPoint, video, or any other creative medium. The topic for 2022 was: “Trauma-Informed Care”. Our 2022 winners are:

- Fellow (PA-C) Division, 2023 PSPA Conference Registration: Bryan Bilbao, PA-C
  - Student Division, \$1,000 Award: Joanna Johnson, PA-S (Drexel University)
- Congratulations Bryan and Joanna!



## Our 2023 Thomas J. Lemley Award for Health Disparities Competition topic is: “The Care of Adopted and/or Foster Patient’s and Their Families”

Every year, almost 424,000 children are living in the United States foster care system. Over 122,00 of these children are eligible for adoptive but, on average, they will wait four years for an adoptive family. More than 69,000 of these children live in institutions, groups homes, and other environments. In 2019, over 20,000 children aged out of the foster care system. Most of them will leave without the emotional and financial support necessary to succeed (US Department of Health and Human Services).

International adoptions have decreased over the last several years (1,622 adoptions in 2020 and 2,971 adoptions in 2019) largely due to increased regulations in the United States. Millions of children all over the world remain in need of a home (American Adoptions).

Families of foster and/or adopted children may face financial challenges, uncertainty in the foster/adoptive process, and struggle to find support/community, among other things. Foster and/or adopted children face unique challenges, including (but not limited to):

- Cultural differences from foster/adopted family and/or community
- Language barriers with family and/or community
- Issues with acclimatization to new environment
- Previous trauma resulting in emotional and behavioral disturbances
- Grief, separation, and loss
- Self-esteem and identity
- Unknown family medical history

The aforementioned issues are just a few examples of what foster and/or adopted patients and their families face. To honor the mission of Dr. Eugene Stead and all who were instrumental in the birth of our profession,



we ask that you explore ways to improve the overall care and awareness of this special population. Culturally competent PAs should look for ways to heighten awareness of disparities that exist and integrate knowledge of cultural factors to patient education and instructions.

*Please be on the lookout for more information to come!*

*References: ccainstitute.org, americanadoptions.com*

## Nonna from page 13

when dealing with “uncomfortable situations” and those that dangle away from society’s status quo of being “normal”. After many hours of editing with my friend Brian, we created the project and I gave insight for healthcare workers on how to address these situations and what to learn from these people that presented as patients. The video did well and was shared through various facets of social media and currently has over 12,000 views on YouTube. To my surprise as well, the video ended up being an official selection to the 2022, I, Immigrant Film Festival!

I then created a follow-up project the following year for my senior capstone by “flipping the script” and actually interviewing influential people within the medical community of Pennsylvania, such as the physician general of Pennsylvania: Dr. Denise Johnson and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. I interviewed the wonderful and amazing Jane Arenas and Kathryn Reed, where they beautifully detailed what the PSPA does and how they implement addressing healthcare disparities within their educational programs and in their personal lives as PAs. I included PA students from both my alma mater, the Pennsylvania College of Technology, and King’s College in Wilkes-Barre, PA. Other PAs and medical professionals were included in this video too. I invested over 100 hours of editing and interviewing alongside going to rotations everyday and studying for my end of rotation exams and PANCE! The video currently has over 7,500 views on YouTube.



I could not have done these projects, especially my last one, without the help from my wonderful state society, the PSPA. The constant emailing and utilizing resources within the group through Jane and Kat, it would not have added the special Physician Assistant twist to my project, especially because Jane and Kat are active members in the PSPA trying to fight healthcare disparities and influencing the future of PA students within Pennsylvania. I could not have done it without my alma mater, the Pennsylvania College of Technology, specifically Heather Dorman always pushing me to be my best self as a future provider and teaching that medicine is more than just “knowing the diagnosis”. I could not have done it especially without my family and the love of my life, Alyvia. My fiancée would drive (2) hours every weekend to come stay with me and help me study, constantly help me set up meetings to meet people, help me with my video projects, and always remind me that what I was doing was for the common good,

even when I would lose sleep or at times lose hope. She was my rock throughout PA school. And of course, I could not have done this without my beautiful Nonna, Italia Gallo Cusati.

Although I miss my Nonna every single day, I could not have done this without her and the endless love she gave me. She influenced me in ways I never would have imagined and even now, I always remind myself during difficult cases that this patient is “somebody’s somebody” and maybe they are “someone’s Nonna”. I will always fight for healthcare disparities in honor of her. I have joined the PSPA’s Health Disparities committee to continue my learning into this topic and see what amazing things this group is going to do for the future betterment of all patients.

My Nonna would always tell me “No te pierdas” which translates to “Don’t get lost”. As providers, let’s never get lost in our own biases and busy hectic day to day lives especially while at work. Remember to always treat everyone as “somebody’s somebody”.

## 21st Annual PSPA 5K RUN



Our pre-dawn walk to the exciting Allegheny river on Friday, 11/4/22, warmed up the 11 participants in this year Annual PSPA 5 K run/walk. The runners started on the 9th St. bridge during a beautiful sunrise, then went over the bridge, down the stairs, then headed up the river's edge and returned on the same course back on the Allegheny river and back over the bridge. The weather could not have been better for 5K runners, 50 degrees, fair, and no wind! Our volunteers also braved the early morning call and came outdoors from the conference to enjoy the fair late fall day. Several of us also enjoyed the silent auction and dancing the night before.

All the runners and walkers were PA-Cs this year and the PA-S volunteered! It was great to have the PA-S this year! We missed the students who in the past not only participated in the 5k but also have always done great work with volunteering and keeping the PA "cando" spirit going. The previous PA-Cs and PA-Ss duals of cross-country style scoring series are tied 4 to 4. The PA-Cs were alone this year and supported each other, but, please come back, PA-Ss.

Eric Patten won the race this year in 23:54. Jessica Schwartz was 2nd place in 26:57. Sarah Sweigart was 2nd female but 3rd overall! Cameron Sweigart was the second male.

Catherine Moran, Samatha Miller, and Cori Davis ( return award winner and several time participants )were 3rd, 4th, and 5th, respectively, in the female division.

The Master's division was added this year along with another award. To be a Master, you must be 40 yrs or older. The winner this year was Emily Young in a time of 34:26. Emily has been running this event for many years and has received previous awards also. Leslie Kruger was second, and Barbara Kruth was 3rd. Hillary Marshall received the Lucky runner award. A new special award for the spirit, which includes a lot of smiling by Hilary!

## Thank you, PSPA!

Thank you, volunteers--Julie Kinzel PA-C (Drexel PA prof!), Deanna Hanson PA-C, Courtney Barrett PA-S, Judy Zheng PA-S, and Jessica Glaser PA-S ( All Drexel U students) (and Natalie Norris for her nice tee shirt design!) An event like this would not have happened without volunteers and PA spirit!

Please exercise most days of the week up to 180 minutes /week and try a low saturated fat, decreased refined sugar diet. I guarantee you will have more energy and less stress!

See you next year in Hershey for the brand new PSPA 5k course and run. An awesome venue not just for the 5k but for the entire PSPA conference experience.

*John Ashton PA-C*

Your PSPA Cross country and track coach.

*P.S. Become a PSPA volunteer and feel the experience of compassionate PAs*



## 2022 PSPA Poster Presentations

Lead Author	Co-Author	Co-Author	School	Poster title
Jamie Hammond MS,MPAS, PA-C	Jason Hare MPAS, PA-C	David C. Beck EdD, MPAS, PA-C, DFAAPA	University of Pittsburgh	Updates for Clinical PAs
Linda Bizzak PA-C	Rosa Fannie PA-C		University of Pittsburgh	The Importance of Professionalism in Physician Assistant Education
Amanda Rogers, PA-S2	Courtney Ercole, PA-C		Drexel University	Before Screening for ACEs: CHECK Yourself
Pedro Bernal PA-S1	L. Carlos Gutierrez EdD, MMS, PA-C	David C. Beck EdD, MPAS, PA-C, DFAAPA	University of Pittsburgh	Health Care Disparities in the Deaf Community
Allison Bakowicz MPAS, PA-C	Megan Gallagher MPAS, PA-C		University of Pittsburgh	Where the &#x26; did I put those discharge papers?!: Benefits of digital copy discharge instructions
Hawi Keno, PA-S	Angelina Zebuski, PA-C		Drexel University	Addressing the Psychological Burden Women Face in the Aftermath of Early Pregnancy Loss (EPL)
Samantha McKown, MPH, PA-S1	Antionette Wilson MMS, PA-C	Dipu Patel, DMSc, MPAS, PA-C	University of Pittsburgh	Peripartum Depression in Low Socioeconomic Women
Brooke Marshall, PA-S	Jamie Hammond MS, MPAS, PA-C	Jason Hare, MPAS, PA-C; Rosa Fannie, MPA, PA-C	University of Pittsburgh	Sex vs. Gender in USPSTF Recommendations
Deionte Harrilla-Gray, BS, PA-S	Amy Brown, MS, PA-C, MPH	Daniel Tolomeo MS, PA-C	University of Pittsburgh	Reducing Bias in Future Providers and Recognizing Differences in Healthcare Access for the LGBTQIA+ Populations
Vina Tran, PA-S	Karthik Hariharan, PT, MS	Tara M. McSwigan, MPAS, PA-C	University of Pittsburgh	Diversity in the Physician Assistant Profession
Kateryna Kocelko, PA-C	Lauren Taylor, MPAS, PA-C	F. Hayden Mulligan, MPAS, PA-C	University of Pittsburgh	COVID-19 or COVID-28? The Long-Term effects of Coronavirus Disease 2019
Amanda Costanza, PT, DPT, PA-S	Dr. Ashley Firm, PharmD	Christina Davis, MPAS, PA-C, MBA	University of Pittsburgh	Management of Cerebral Aneurysms in the Pediatric Population
Austin Griffith MPAS, PA-C	Katelyn Flynn MPAS, PA-C	Rebecca Mancoll MD	UPMC Department of General Internal Medicine	EKG normal variants on a 24 year old patient with pectus excavatum
Erin Pakela, PA-C	Catherine Nowak, PA-C, MS, DFAAPA		Drexel University	Depression in Adolescents and Computerized Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (cCBT) as an Alternate, Accessible Treatment Option
Alyssa Schanz PA-S	Dr. Parmjeet Saini PA-C, DHSc, MPA, PA-C		Drexel University	Identifying Metabolic Syndrome to help Prevent the Progression to Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in the Hispanic community
Chloe Zuri Lang , PA-S	Susan Graff MS, PA-C	Kathryn Reed, MS, PA-C	University of Pittsburgh	Alarming Rates of Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Among Black and Brown Women in the U.S.
Sarah Dover, PA-S	Heather Fritz, PA-C		Slippery Rock University	Effect of Aging on Persons With an Intellectual Disability (ID): A Narrative Literature Review
Laurel Saunders PA-S	Mary Allias EdD, MPAS, PA-C, DFAAPA		University of Pittsburgh	Implementing Lifestyle Medicine to Reduce the Risk of Chronic Diseases
Breanne M Westendorf, MPAS, PA-C	Hannah Glassmire, PA-S,	Natalie Brahm, MSPA, PA-C	Slippery Rock University	Seasonal Affective Disorder's Effect on Postpartum Depression
Heather Fritz, PA-C	Elise A. Somers PA-C	Brandon Hoxworth	Slippery Rock University	Sensory Intervention to Decrease Anxiety in ASD Children
Julianna Souza PA-S	Adrian Banning DHSc, MMS, PA-C		Drexel University	Sleep Disturbance in Physician Assistant Students
Gianna Ricci PA-S	Christine Rodgers, MPAS, PA-C, MPH	Julie Dubis, MPAS; PA-C	University of Pittsburgh	Prioritizing Addiction Services in U.S. Correctional Facilities



# Call for Speakers

**FOR THE 2023 PSPA CME CONFERENCE  
NOVEMBER 29 - DECEMBER 2, 2023**

The PSPA conference committee is announcing a Call for Speakers for the 48th Annual PSPA CME Conference in Hershey, PA at the Hershey Lodge. The PSPA is looking for medical lectures, professional lectures, forums, and workshop presenters. The deadline for submission is December 31, 2022.



The conference committee will make selections in February 2023. Applications will only be accepted online.

Got questions? E-mail [conference@pspa.net](mailto:conference@pspa.net).

**VISIT [HTTPS://PSPA.ONLINE](https://pspa.online) TO  
COMPLETE A SPEAKER APPLICATION**



**THANK YOU TO OUR CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS!!**

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# THANK —

*Thank you to the PSPA CME Conference Volunteers!  
You are the backbone of the conference!  
We couldn't do a successful conference without you!*

Alyssa Abebe	Jackie Borst	DeAnn Hansum	Katelyn Reisenauer
Nicole Ackley	Lane Bower	Kara Haupricht	Rob Ross
Mary Allias	Jennifer Campbell	Marcy Herzog	Erin Roy
Jane Arenas	Tasha Camera	Helen Hiserman	Justine Samanas
John Ashton	Susan Dubendorfer	Alicia Kolling	Corey Seyler
Sarah Atkins	Rob Emery	Kathy Kross	Michele Thal
Rebecca Baldwin	Rosa Fannie	Katie Kugler	Lisa Wetherhold
Dan Barker	Patrice Farquharson	Courtney Lee	Matt Wetherhold
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Cara Bennett	Marcie Fitzgerald	Katie Nelson	

# — YOU

## ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A WAY TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE PSPA?

We invite you to join the conference committee.  
Plans are already underway for the 2023 PSPA CME Conference at the Hershey Lodge in Hershey, PA, November 29 - December 2, 2023.

Come contribute your voice to the 2023 conference.  
Contact [conference@pspa.net](mailto:conference@pspa.net) for details.



to the speakers  
at the PSPA CME  
Conference  
for their time and  
efforts to provide  
great content for the  
attendees.

**Meagan F. Alberts, PA-C**  
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Physician Assistant  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY

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Academic: Assistant  
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PA-C**  
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Fox Chase Cancer Center /  
Temple University Health  
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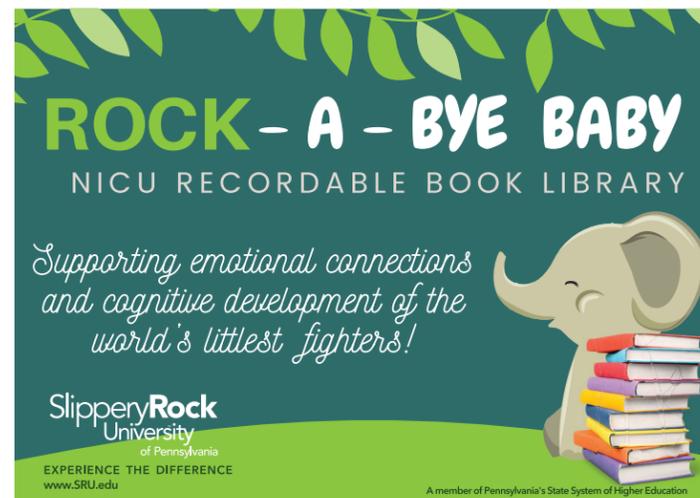
# Student Affairs

## Rock-a-Bye Baby

We are creating a “**recordable book library**” in two of the biggest NICU’s in our Western Pennsylvania region, with the goal of having each sweet baby’s parents, siblings and caregivers be able to record the reading of a story to their little one, that the NICU teams and volunteers are thrilled to play for the babies everyday, when their family cannot physically be present with them.

In support of both the cognitive development of these little ones, along with fostering the emotional connections to their family when they can’t be there... we hope to surround these little fighters with lots of love! The recordable book will then be sent home with baby and family to keep upon discharge.

If you have a tie to Western PA, have experience with a little one’s NICU stay, or simply have a big heart, we would appreciate your support!



**To donate go to:** <https://www.srufoundation.org/give.html>

Choose ANY monetary donation amount, every bit helps! Under designation select “other” and type: “Rock-A-Bye Baby”

### Upcoming leadership events

#### AAPA Executive Leadership Summit

- March 6-8, 2023 Washington DC
- Registration open - <https://www.aapa.org/events/elc/>
- Agenda <https://www.aapa.org/events/elc/#tabs-4-agenda>

#### Leadership and Advocacy Summit Save the date

- September 28 – September 30, 2023 in Arlington, VA

### Announcing Leadership Academy 2022

Applications for the 2023 Leadership Academy are now available. PAs who are in leadership or looking for a leadership position in their organization or in PSPA are encouraged to apply. The Leadership Academy is a series of monthly virtual meetings that explore different leadership topics designed to give participants tools and knowledge to help them grow in their roles. A new cohort will be starting in January.

Contact [pspa@pspa.net](mailto:pspa@pspa.net) for more information  
Application on page 23.



# Leadership

## 2023 PSPA Leadership Academy Application

The PSPA Leadership Academy is designed to engage PAs and PA students who share an interest in leadership and advocacy. The Academy provides an introduction into leadership competencies to aid in the pursuit of leadership opportunities within PSPA, healthcare organizations, academics, and the private sector.

The Leadership Academy will consist of a series of online meetings occurring every 3-4 weeks, lasting 60-90 minutes per session. Sessions will run January-September 2023. There may be additional required readings. You will be responsible for obtaining assigned reading materials. As members of the Leadership Academy, you will be encouraged to participate in Hill Day (a day of advocating for the profession with state legislators) which is usually held in the spring. The program will conclude at the 2023 PSPA Annual Conference, where certificates will be presented during the Leadership Committee’s Professional Development Forum.

### Requirements:

- All participants must be PSPA Members
- You must attend 10 of the 12 meetings
- Cost: \$50 (for technical and administrative costs)

**To Apply:** Submit completed application by December 31.

Name/Credentials: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Email: \_\_\_\_\_

PA Program / Place of employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation Date (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership Experience/History: \_\_\_\_\_

If known, what PSPA position/committee are you interested in joining and why?

Please attach a statement of interest that includes three professional goals and letter of recommendation from a fellow PA.

**The completed application can be submitted electronically to [pspa@pspa.net](mailto:pspa@pspa.net) , mailed to the address below or faxed to 724-836-4449 by December 31.** \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail personal check payable to PSPA, to:

PSPA  
PO Box 128  
Greensburg, PA 15601

To pay by credit card, complete the following information:

Visa, Master Card, Discover or American Express only

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## Ronald H. Byerly — Life as a PA

By Rob Ross, PA-C History Committee Chair

Ron Byerly is the recently retired Physician Assistant Director for Geisinger Health System. Ron grew up in Dalmatia, Pennsylvania and graduated from Bloomsburg University (then Bloomsburg State College) with a B.S. in Biology. While pursuing a M.S. in Vertebrate Physiology, his father happened to attend a Kiwanis event where the speaker was Ron Fisher who was the Chief Physician Assistant for Geisinger Health System at that time. Ron Fisher is also a Past President of PSPA and AAPA. Ron Byerly's father told him about the PA profession, and Ron decided to pursue it. In 1978, he entered the original Hershey PA Program where he also met his wife Luann (also a PA). Their class was 40 students and a 50/50 mix of men/women. About half the men in the program were Veterans. In 1981, he started working in family practice in Selinsgrove, PA. His wife wanted to pursue a surgery position, so they moved to Rhode Island in 1983 where he worked at a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center. They returned to Pennsylvania in 1990 when he took on a clinical and administrative role at the White Deer Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Center. In 1992, he made the move to Geisinger where he worked for the next 30 years in Outpatient Internal Medicine. This department was heavily into teaching, and helped him develop an interest in PA education as well as providing him with an extensive education in Internal Medicine. Like all of his prior positions, he was the first PA on the team. In 2009, Geisinger established an APP Council which included CRNA and CRNP Directors in order to assist in expanding the health system by recruiting and retaining more APPs. He started in a one day per week administrative role as Director of Physician Assistant Services.

### How did your leadership position with Geisinger bring your interests together?

The internal medicine department was heavily into teaching which fulfilled that personal interest. A key part of teaching in clinical environments is that it is good for recruiting, so we supported teaching endeavors across the health system. I also wanted to do more for retention of PAs. A leadership role allowed me to do more for PA professional development through teaching, and with the expertise of other Council APPs, improve retention. First and foremost, it takes a team, and that team would also include partnering with HR, Credentialing and Legal Services. My leadership role allowed me to contribute to continuing professional development activities plus having oversight for a PA residency program.

When I started with Geisinger in 1992 they had around 75 PAs. By 2009 there were about 200 and that grew to around 600 presently. Early on, the growth of the PA profession was fueled by government spending. Now it is fueled by demand and we were able to help supply that need. The APP Council at Geisinger eventually became its own department, and then it really took off. I was able to work closely with my counterpart CRNP Director, Alison Mowery to grow the APP presence which included closing the chasm between our professions while celebrating and recognizing the differences in our training.

### What changes and concerns do you have about PA education?

PA students are typically younger now, and fewer are doing it as a second career. A strength of our profession is the diversity in our backgrounds. Also,

the programs are more expensive now, and the students are incurring more debt. On the upside, I've noticed many PA students and early PAs possess significantly better writing skills as opposed to 30 or 40 years ago. One of the things that helped me succeed early in my career was being a good writer. I attribute this to one of my high school English teachers, Ruth Kolsbun. My mother was previously employed as a secretary for a US senator, and she also worked with me to become a good writer.

### How did you get started with PSPA, and what was your involvement?

Admittedly, I did not rejoin PSPA when I returned to Pennsylvania. I did not recognize the value until later on when I attended one of their annual CME conferences. I have mainly been involved as a member of the Governmental Affairs Committee. The advocacy and education PSPA provides is so important. I wish more PAs realized it.

### What are some of your fondest memories as a PA? ‘

As a PA student, I was in a family practice which included the student clinic at Susquehanna University. The clinic was slow in the summer with so few students around campus so we closed over lunch. I came back from lunch early to find a student waiting on the curb outside the clinic wheezing. I noticed he had hives all over him too. From interviewing him, I discovered he had recently taken the first dose of a penicillin prescription. I gave him an epinephrine injection then called EMS. He was taken to the ED. When my precepting physician returned, I told him what I had done and that I probably broke a few rules. He told me that I had probably saved the patient's

life. That was the first time I was able to use my training to provide good, meaningful work for another human being. It was a great feeling, and made me realize all the hard work to reach that point was worth it.

When I was working in drug and alcohol rehab, there was a patient who was making threats to harm himself if we did not give him the drugs he wanted. It was a situation where he was likely being manipulative. Calling his bluff, I contacted the police and ambulance, and I can still recall him cussing me out as they took him away to the local, locked psychiatric ward. The institution held an annual picnic for former patients. About a year later, I was in my office during one of those events when he stopped by with his wife and children. He wanted them to meet the person he credited with saving his life. That meeting still makes me very emotional, even now.

Lastly, when the APP Council was begun, we discovered that “full medical staff membership” was not legally possible for APPs in Pennsylvania. Geisinger's Chief Medical Officer eventually granted all 3 APP Directors ex officio status on Geisinger Medical Center's Medical Executive Committee. Later we received full membership with voting privileges. This was a huge deal and nationally, we were one of the first organizations to allow this. Now PAs and/or other APPs are on every Medical Executive Committee throughout our system. Having PAs participate at this level obviously benefits us in that we have representation, but the health system benefits too because we provide knowledge of our profession to them.

### What has surprised you the most about how the PA profession has changed?

The increasing emphasis on academics. Not just the PA programs,

but continuing education as well. I have been impressed with the quality of CME provided by PSPA. Also, my administrative role allowed me to see just how much weight, meaning, and importance PSPA's advocacy work continues to contribute. In my role, I was able to see and explain how the legislative changes benefitted my patients and health system. I was able to use the PA Practice Acts to explain why changes were needed.

### What do you think is something current PAs take for granted about our profession?

Mainly the blood, sweat and tears that went into the regulatory changes including interpreting the regulatory changes into today's healthcare landscape. Currently, about 1/3 of physicians are involved with private practices, therefore approximately 1/3 of PAs must be as well. I feel we are at a disadvantage there and it works against us, as presumably 2/3 of PAs have credentialing, privileging and regulatory compliance managed for them, “sight unseen”. In private practice, you gain more of an appreciation for interpreting the regulations. I was the first PA in every practice I joined, and I had to educate myself and those teams about what I could and could not do. Having intimate knowledge of our regulations and applying them for my practices was definitely a theme through my career.

### What are some of the biggest future challenges for PAs?

Not long ago, my answer would have been removing countersignature requirements, but thankfully we accomplished that goal last year. There is still a lot of work to do in implementing that though. Going forward, we are STILL a very new profession when compared to physicians and nurses. I think our regulations and credentialing should

cross state lines. If you do something in one state, why can't you do it in another?

### If you could change something about your time as a PA, what would it be?

There is nothing that I wish were different. Every experience and role helped me. Even though I was in a leadership position, I never felt like a boss. That was until you (meaning this interviewer) were sitting near me at a conference and mentioned to the others sitting nearby that we needed to be on our best behavior because the boss was here. I never thought of myself this way, but it did make me feel good to know I was respected that way by other PAs. It also makes me happy to know that my career choice made my parents happy.

### Do you have any words of wisdom or something to share with the PSPA membership?

Focus on membership. Let everyone know as often as you can, everything PSPA has done for PAs. Be more vocal about our value with non-members.

### Do you have plans to stay involved as a practicing PA or a member of PSPA?

I already let my PA license go, so I will no longer be practicing. I plan to continue in my role with PSPA for now.

### Do you have any plans for your retirement?

I have been doing more downhill skiing, hiking and camping. I look forward to spending more time with all my family. Also, we recently went on a mission trip with our church to Eastern Kentucky for some construction and disaster relief work and hope to do more trips like that. Lastly, we hope to do some travel, and I have considered taking on some wilderness medicine training.

# Member Spotlight

## Recognizing Audrey Eshleman

By Stephanie Benko, PA-C Membership Committee Chair

### How did you decide to become a physician assistant?

After caring for residents at a local nursing home as a CNA, I knew that I wanted to become a health care provider

### Where did you attend PA school?

Chatham University Pittsburgh, PA

### In which specialty do you practice, and how did you choose this specialty?

Currently practicing in an outpatient gastroenterology clinic at Geisinger in Danville, PA. Prior to specializing in GI, I had practiced in Urology for 7 years. Many of the patients I saw in Urology were also GI patients. As I learned more and more about GI disorders, specializing in GI seemed a logical move.

### What is your favorite part of being a physician assistant?

My favorite part of being a PA is getting to help people. There's nothing like being able to diagnose and resolve a problem for a patient.

### What do you find most challenging as a physician assistant?

Since COVID the greatest challenge I've had as a PA is the lack of access patients have to care and procedures. The COVID backlog and supply chain issues have made getting procedures done in a timely fashion very challenging.



### Please describe your family.

Middle child, with an older brother, younger sister. Parent's happily married since 1979, started dating in 1976, both sides of the family can be traced back to the Hans Herr house in Lancaster, PA

### What are your hobbies? What do you like to do for fun?

Landscaping, DIY furniture makeovers, gardening, hiking, speaking spanish, going to mom and pop restaurants, watching foreign films, Thai/korean/chinese dramas, travel



### What are you favorite:

Sports team:

**Philadelphia Eagles**

Food: **Empanadas**

Ice cream:

**Mint chocolate chip**

Movie:

**10 things I hate about you**

TV show:

**Canceled now- Legacies, Roswell, New Mexico**

Musical artist or genre of music:

**Maroon 5 saw them in concert, experience of a lifetime**

Board game:

**Monopoly**

Vacation spot:

**Iceland**

## PSU Survey

Researchers at Penn State University are partnering with the PA Department of Health to better understand the experiences of individuals who work in the healthcare system. We are interested in hearing from anyone who works in healthcare in the state of Pennsylvania.

We are asking individuals to complete a two-part survey, which will assess PPE knowledge, factors associated with infection control education, and experiences related to COVID-19.

All responses are anonymous and will not be traced to you or to your institution.

This survey should take you no more than 15-20 minutes and if you complete the entire survey you will be able to register for two chances to win a \$250 gift card!

Please go to

<https://pspa.net/resources/surveys/> for information and to start the survey.

## Persad Center: 50 years of serving Pittsburgh's LGBTQ+ Community

Persad Center is the nation's second oldest licensed mental health center specifically created to serve the LGBTQ+ community. The PA Society of Physicians Assistants were proud to select them as their host charity for their recent conference in Pittsburgh.

Founded in 1972, Persad was created in response to the demand for specialized, nondiscriminatory services expressed by LGBTQ+ individuals through an underground Pittsburgh gay hotline. Started by a group of gay activists in Allegheny County, the hotline was originally established to provide LGBTQ+ people with information regarding safe places to meet one another and as a communication network to make LGBTQ+ people aware of happenings in the community. The goal was to establish a caring, safe space where everyone, regardless of their ability to pay, could access its services.

"Homosexuality was still considered a mental illness in mental health circles," Huggins noted. "So if you went to a therapist, the goal was to 'cure' you of being gay instead of helping you to adjust to your minority status and the discrimination and prejudice that you may have experienced."

In an effort to meet the community's requests for safe, non-judgmental mental health services, founders Dr. James Huggins and Randy Forrester along with their friends, sketched out the plans for Persad while traveling on a bus headed to DC to protest the Vietnam War. The name Persad was chosen by merging the words "personal" and "adjustment".

For the next 8-10 years, Persad spent its time focused on building its mental health business. Then the mid-1980s came along and word started spreading on the news of a newly discovered disease killing 20 and 30 somethings. No one knew how it was spread, there was no test to confirm whether a person was infected. It blinded T-cells and left people vulnerable to opportunistic infections and malignancies. At first, most reported cases were in big cities such as New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Chicago.

Then Huggins began seeing its devastation first-hand as Persad's clients started showing up gravely ill. And then they started dying. AIDS had arrived in Pittsburgh.

It was 1982 and Persad was among the many groups in the Pittsburgh region that stepped up to care for individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS during the early days of the epidemic. At a point of confusion and fear, a coalition of local agencies, research institutions, healthcare providers, neighborhood leaders, and faith-based organization aligned to offer services, comfort and a sense of community.

Fear, stigma and shame were at high levels and Persad reached out to the health and social services community, establishing a training and education program to change professional opinions on AIDS. The organization collaborated with healthcare providers, social workers, and mental health professionals to confront the stigmas and fear that led some to deny services to HIV-positive



individuals and also train them on universal prevention methods once it was known how the virus spread.

This led to Persad leading the formation of Pittsburgh's first area council on AIDS in 1987. Three years later, the organization played a prominent role in establishing a local chapter of PFLAG, a grassroots organization, which furthers LGBT acceptance and equality through support, education and advocacy.

Fast forward 30 years and today, Persad offers Counseling, Transgender services, HIV/AIDS support, and Community Training. In 2021, the agency saw over 1,000 clients and provided over 13,000 hours of mental health.

Covid-19 and Telemedicine has enabled the agency to expand its services out to rural areas where its specialized services exist. Persad's caring and compassionate staff includes professional, licensed therapists, a staff psychiatrist, and a soon-to-be-hired Nurse Practitioner. Persad accepts all commercial insurances and over 50% of its clients are on Medicaid. Persad remains committed to never turn away anyone who needs its mental health services.

There's been a huge uptick in the visibility of the transgender and gender non-conforming community. It's

*continued on p. 30*



# Pennsylvania Society of Physicians Assistants

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Bring your practice concerns to your liaison's attention

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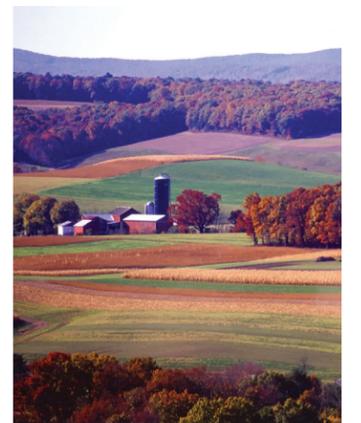
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Phone: (678) 417-8100  
Fax: (678) 417-8135

### DEA Number Applications

Philadelphia Office  
(215) 597-9536

### State Board of Medicine

P.O. Box 2649  
Harrisburg, PA 17105  
(717) 787-2381

### State Board of Osteopathic Medicine

P.O. Bo 2649  
Harrisburg, PA 17105  
(717) 783-4858

### Medicare Provider Number Provider File

Pennsylvania Blue Shield  
1800 Center Road  
Camp Hill, PA 17011

### Medicare Provider Enrollment

P.O. Box 890157  
Camp Hill, PA 17089  
(717) 612-4415

## Persad Center

*continued from p.27*

important to note that these community members have always been here, we just didn't see them and didn't understand them.

How can Persad support you?

We want you to think of Persad first when you have a patient who may be struggling with their sexuality. We can help steer them into a regular mental health treatment plan. You may come across a patient who has indicated that they are non-binary or transgender. At Persad, we have trained professional staff specialize in this area of care. Housing, food and employment resources can cause people to not focus on their mental health and Persad can help connect people to those resources.

LGBTQ+ people experience alarmingly high rates of mental health challenges. It disrupts their daily lives and can be life-threatening. Over a majority of LGBTQ+ adults in the United States are facing significant mental health challenges today, and over a majority of LGBTQ+ high schoolers in the United States have symptoms of depression. For 50 years, Persad Center has been the leading the way in providing culturally competent LGBTQ+ mental health services in Pennsylvania.

### Christine Bryan

Director of Communications & Development  
cbryan@persadcenter.org  
412-441-9796  
PersadCenter.org

To make a donation, click the QR code:



Or visit [www.PersadCenter.org/donation](http://www.PersadCenter.org/donation)

## PSPA Members Get a Complimentary Financial Planning Consultation

As a Physician Assistant, you are a highly trained medical professional. However, very little of that education is in the realm of personal finance.

In medicine, triage gives you a system for prioritizing patients in an emergency. But when it comes to your finances, it is hard to know what should take priority. Do I put money here? Do I put money there? Do I pay off debt? When everything is tied for first place, it is impossible to know what the next steps should be.

At Lifetime Financial Growth, we help physician assistants achieve financial balance. Our jargon-free, interactive, and intuitive process will educate you on how to successfully protect, grow, and enjoy wealth through all stages of life.

**We integrate a wide range of services into one cohesive financial plan.**

- Protection and Insurance Planning
- Wealth Management
- Retirement Planning
- Estate Planning
- College Planning
- Cash Flow & Debt Management

Scan the QR code to schedule your complimentary personal consultation!



<https://app.acuityscheduling.com/schedule.php?owner=14866038&calendarID=1791516>



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## PSPA Challenge Bowl Coordinator Job Description

The Challenge Bowl coordinator is responsible for planning and running the PSPA Annual Student Challenge Bowl that is held at the Annual Conference. This person acts as the chair of the Challenge Bowl sub-subcommittee of the Conference Committee. The coordinator works closely with the Conference Meeting Planner and the PSPA Board Administrator to accomplish these duties. The coordinator shall be a PSPA member in good standing and not directly affiliated with any one PA school in the state as to avoid any perception of impropriety or favoritism.

### Duties:

#### Prior to the conference

- Create letter of invitation to participate in the PSPA Student Challenge Bowl to be distributed to the PA schools for the Board Administrator to distribute
- Accept and organize registrant schools to participate in the Student Challenge Bowl
- Answer questions from participant schools as needed
- Review current rules to ensure they are up to date and accurately reflect the current practices of the Student Challenge Bowl
- Review the question bank and ensure the questions cover all specialties of medicine, are clear and concise and are appropriate for students knowledge level
- Write new questions of varying degrees of difficulty for medical specialties as needed to ensure breadth of questions and variety from year to year
- Recruit volunteers for the key positions at the Student Challenge Bowl

#### Master of Ceremony

- Runs the Student Challenge Bowl rounds
- Reads questions
- Calls upon the team that buzzes in to answer
- Determines if answers are correct or if it needs to be determined acceptable by the judging panel

#### Judges (3)

- Determine if answer given is an acceptable alternate answer than written on the question card when asked to by the Master of Ceremony

#### Time Keeper

- Keeps the time remaining for teams to buzz in to answer the question
- Keeps the time remaining to answer each question
- Keeps the time remaining in the round

#### Score Keepers

##### Main score keeper

- Keeps score for each round
- Projects the score for all participants to see
- Maintains and projects the competition bracket

##### Second score keeper

- Keeps score in a location at the Student Challenge Bowl where they cannot see or speak to the main score keeper
- Compares their score with the main score keeper at the end of each round

#### Door Prize Distribution

- Bring door prizes that are won by students to that student

#### Room monitors

(2-5 depending on size of room)

- Responsible to walk the Student Challenge Bowl room to ensure no one is talking, has phone out, is communicating with the teams on stage, disruptive etc.

Purchase door prizes (if not donated by others)

Purchase Prizes for the winners

- 1st Place • 2nd Place • 3rd Place

Purchase/coordinate prize for the School Spirit Award

Coordinate with the Awards Committee Chair to set timing of the presentation of student awards

Coordinate with the Health Disparities Chair to set timing of the presentation of student awards

Notify score keeper of final list of schools participating and work together to set bracket with number of rounds and teams per round

Write reminders/articles for constant contact and the newsletter as requested

#### At the conference

- Ensure all participating schools have donated to the annual charity by the specified deadline
  - Disqualify schools that do not meet this requirement
- Brief volunteers of their duties during the Student Challenge Bowl and be the expert for any Student Challenge Bowl questions or concerns
- Speak to other Challenge Bowl staff to determine and award the School Spirit Award
- Set the room layout plan with the Conference Planner and AV team
- Pull questions for each round of play prior to the Student Challenge Bowl Commencing
  - This could be done prior to the conference if preferred
- Arrive to the Student Challenge Bowl location early to set up and ensure all runs smoothly

#### After the conference

- Write and submit a newsletter article highlighting and recapping/summarizing the Student Challenge Bowl

#### General duties

- Store and transport buzzer system
- Store and transport unused door prizes
- Attend the Conference Planning Committee Meeting in January

## Seeking Constant Contact Coordinator

Constant Contact is an online email distribution company that the PSPA uses in order to reach the membership and try to connect with non-members. The system utilizes templates that can be customized to a limited extent. Currently, PSPA uses Constant Contact to send a monthly electronic newsletter ("e-news brief") to members, and as needed alerts to members and non-members.

### Job Description

Constant Contact coordinator will produce a monthly e-news brief. Each e-news brief will include at a minimum a clinical pearl, health disparities focus and mobile app; it may also include a medical themed joke or video and links to the PSPA Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts. Depending on the time of

year, briefs will also include renewal reminders and a focus on conference registration. If specific committees or the Board of Directors requests a specific email alert, the coordinator will deliver the posting as timely as possible.

If interested, contact the PSPA Board Administrator at [pspa@pspa.net](mailto:pspa@pspa.net).



**Pennsylvania Society of Physician Assistants**

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**In this Issue**

**2023 Physician Fee Schedule Rule  
Conference 2022 Highlights  
PSPA Award Winners  
Challenge Bowl  
2022 PSPA Charity**

**Next PSPA News deadline is  
January 15, 2023**

**Send photos and submissions for next issue to  
[pspa@pspa.net](mailto:pspa@pspa.net)**