

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Tran](#)

Current information about the CHA/PA Physician Assistant Program at the University of Colorado Denver.



## CHA/PA Newsletter

Read on to learn more about upcoming events, faculty and graduate accomplishments, scholarship recipients, and much more!



### Surviving COVID – Life as a 2nd Year CHA/PA Student

The class of 2023 experienced their first year as PA students much differently than expected: due to COVID-19, the majority of classes were held remotely. Students were navigating all the unknowns of their first year on top of living through a global pandemic.



### Welcome, New Faculty and Staff!

Kristen Oase, Boyd Hammond, Cassandra Bengen and Nicole Giovannoni are the newest

Subscribe	Past Issues	Tran
	<p>Two second year students were asked questions regarding their transition from remote to in-person learning experience. All in all, our class of 2023 is glad for the return of in-person classes. See their responses below:</p> <p><b>How did you cope with your 1st year being primarily remote?</b></p> <p>"I liked it at the time because I did not know the difference. There were some challenges obviously but as an introverted person I was okay. Now I would not want to go back." – Molly Andrus</p> <p>"It was difficult. In class, it felt soulless and days dragged by. Outside of class I tried my best to do things that got me out of a seat and off a computer, but because of COVID I was mostly confined to video games, exercising, and TV." – Bryan Truong</p> <p><b>Generally, how has the transition from remote to in-person learning been going?</b></p> <p>"It's been great. I feel like part of a community and I'm more inspired to take care of myself and challenge myself each day." –Bryan Truong</p> <p><b>What are positive aspects of remote learning you experienced? What are positive aspects of in-person learning you are experiencing as a 2nd year?</b></p> <p>"In person it is much easier to focus</p>	<p>additions to our team. Learn more about them below:</p> <p>Kristen Oase, PA–C, MS has joined the CHA/PA faculty as an instructor. Kristen graduated from Rosalind Franklin University PA Program in Illinois in 2012. She has worked in Infectious Diseases, Acute Care Surgery, and eventually found her clinical passion in GI Surgical Oncology. Moving to Denver in 2017, she continued working in GI Surgical Oncology at the University of Colorado Hospital. Kristen started lecturing with the CHA/PA program in 2019 and discovered a new passion for teaching. She will serve as Director for the MSK/Neuro block in the Spring. In her free time, she enjoys reading, yoga, running, anything outdoors, and spending time with her husband of 12 years and their 2 dogs and 1 cat.</p> <p>Boyd Hammond, MPAS, PA–C graduated from Colorado State University (go rams!) before attending the University of Colorado's PA program. He graduated from CHA/PA in 2018. Boyd worked in private practice rheumatology for a short period of time before joining the division of endocrinology at CU. He worked inpatient on the glucose management team as well as outpatient with the integrated</p>

Subscribe	Past Issues	Tran
<p>and ask questions. Remote learning you just have more time to eat and sleep since you cut out the travel time which was nice." – Molly Andrus</p> <p>"The minimal amount of time taken up by commuting and getting 'ready' for each day. Connection, interaction, joking, laughing, being human, etc." – Bryan Truong</p>	<p>transgender program. He continues clinical practice with endocrinology and with the DAWN clinic at night. Boyd will work on the CVP and Endo/Repro blocks for the CHA/PA program. He participates in research on aging transgender patients and works with DEI initiatives on campus. He enjoys time in the mountains whether it be hiking, backpacking, hot springs, or just exploring with his partner Kevin Huynh (a fellow CHA/PA grad) and their very spoiled dog Maia.</p> <p>Cassandra Bengen recently joined the CHA/PA staff as our new Clinical Services Coordinator. Her duties include providing administrative support to students, faculty and staff. She is originally from Upstate New York but lived in South Carolina for the past 5 years. She graduated from the University of South Carolina with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Health and plans to continue her education in the future. Cassandra spends her free time hiking, reading and camping. She also loves to find new food places so if you have any recommendations in the area, please let her know!</p> <p>Nicole Giovannoni comes to the University of Colorado CHA/PA Program staff as our new Didactic Services Coordinator. She will be</p>	



### Reaching out to Support Early Childhood Literacy Efforts in the Community

CHA/PA Program's Silver Society, the student-run arm of Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), has partnered with long-time community partner Salud Family Health Center on a book drive to collect gently used books as part of Salud's Reach Out and Read Program. The books collected will help the clinic provide waiting room books, books to siblings who have aged out of the program, or to kids when they come to the clinic for something other than a

Subscribe	Past Issues	Tran
<p>wellness visit. These literacy-rich clinic environments help promote reading aloud with children, which is the overarching goal of Reach Out and Read model. Additionally, children between 6 months and 5 years of age receive a brand-new, developmentally appropriate book at their well child visits, while anticipatory guidance around early literacy is discussed by a provider. If you would like to help support the Silver Society book drive with your own gently used book donations, please reach out to our faculty liaison, Tanya Fernandez (<a href="mailto:Tanya.Fernandez@CUAnschutz.edu">Tanya.Fernandez@CUAnschutz.edu</a>).</p> <p>– Tanya Fernandez, Faculty</p>	<p>working with staff and faculty to reach didactic goals and assist in planning program events. Nicole is from Minnesota, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Sociology/Anthropology from Gustavus Adolphus College. She has worked in the case management field in both Minnesota and Colorado. Nicole is excited to explore all the outdoor opportunities Colorado has to offer, as she just moved here in 2020! In her free time, she enjoys hiking, camping and spending time with friends, family and her sweet dog Zoey.</p>	<div data-bbox="915 1098 1312 1239" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="889 1236 1347 1325" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>Faculty and Staff Present at 2021 PAEA</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="870 1350 1300 1512" data-label="Text"> <p>Several faculty and staff participated in the virtual 2021 PAEA conference as described below:</p> </div> <div data-bbox="870 1562 1362 1770" data-label="Text"> <p>Creating a Guiding Light: Building a Custom Curriculum Map to Inform Curriculum Design (Virtual Lecture): Kay Denler and Jacqueline Sivahop.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="870 1814 1266 1896" data-label="Text"> <p>Rethinking the Basic Science Curriculum (Virtual Panel)</p> </div>



### Preceptor Serving Around the World

Earlier in his career as an RN, Ed Medina found himself alone with a patient (the on-call PA showered first before coming in.) The patient began decompensating, but quickly following ACLS protocols, Ed stabilized the patient back in a normal rhythm. Once



[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Tran](#)

the on-call PA arrived, he asked Ed, "What do you need me for? You fixed him." That's the moment when Ed considered becoming a PA himself.

Today, Ed is a PA working four days a week in a rural Colorado clinic as a Primary Care Provider, one day a week in a walk-in Family Practice Clinic, and precepting our CHA/PA students! Ed hails from a family of health professionals – his aunt was the first Nurse Practitioner in the country!

With his passion to work with underserved populations, Ed and his family served a mission in Cameroon, Africa from 2001–2004. Ed worked in a sixty-bed women's ward and went to three different "out-station" clinics in rural areas once a month. On top of that, he oversaw the hospital's HIV/AIDS program his last six months.

At first, the physicians in the Cameroon hospital didn't know what to do with him – they had never worked with a PA before. Initially, Ed worked as an RN, but after explaining his training, he was put to work in the role of a regular physician. Clinical medicine in the Cameroon hospital was key, as there were few lab tests. Electricity was erratic for x-ray and ultrasounds.

Ed was to make another trip to serve at a hospital in Uganda in 2020 for a two-year commitment, however due to

Discussion): Erin Hoffman, Michael MacLean, Jacqueline Sivahop and Darwin Brown.

Jonathan Bowser participated as speaker for the Coffee Chats with PAEA's Board of Directors, as well as 2021 Presidents Commission.



### Faculty Present at 2021 SPAP Conference

Faculty members Tanya Fernandez and Joyce Nieman presented at the Society for Physician Assistants in Pediatrics Annual CME Conference virtually this year. The title of their presentation was: The Art and Joy of Bedside Teaching.



### CAPA 2021 Spring CME Conference

On top of faculty and staff presenting at PAEA and SPAP,

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Tran](#)

COVID, the trip has been postponed. On top of serving in Cameroon, Ed has worked short trips in Honduras, Belize, and Ecuador.

Having the ability to listen and support individuals with their concerns and witnessing positive health outcomes gives Ed joy and satisfaction in his career. He thrives working with varied patients and experiencing unknown challenges. As a preceptor, he loves when aspects of the field click in students' minds – when they “get it.” Ed encourages future PAs to work with underserved populations, to keep positive, and to remember to laugh.



### **Volunteers Needed for National Western Stockshow**

The Colorado Area Health Education Program office is providing free health screenings at their booth at the National Western Stock Show on January 8th–23rd 2022. This is a fun volunteer opportunity to visit the Stock Show and spend time with health

faculty member Boyd Hammond presented at the Colorado Academy of PAs Virtual Spring Conference this year. The title of Boyd's presentation was: Updates in Diabetes Care – SGLT-2 Inhibitors and GLP1 Receptor Agonists Therapy.



### **National Health Service Corps Scholarship Recipient**

Second year student, Casey Balamut, was awarded the National Health Service Corps Scholarship. The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program (NHSC SP) awards scholarships to students interested in eligible primary care health professions training. Scholars then commit to provide primary care health services in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs.) Read more regarding Casey's experience as a CHA/PA student and thoughts on the scholarship:

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)

Tran

professionals and students. Health professions' students, clinical and non-clinical faculty and staff can volunteer. If interested in volunteering, visit [this website](#) to learn more.



### **Save the Date: 14th Annual Reach the Peak Asthma and Allergy Overview And Update**

Reach the Peak, provided by Children's Hospital Colorado Breathing Institute, offers a cross-practice overview of asthma and allergy management. It is also an extensive review course for the National Asthma Educator Certification Board (NAECB) AE-C exam. Target audience includes physicians, advanced practice providers, nurses, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, clinical social workers, certified health educators and other asthma care professionals. The conference will be held virtually this year on April 13th-14th, 2022. Registration information will be coming soon! To stay updated on registration information, visit <https://ce.childrenscolorado.org/>.

I first became interested in CHA/PA because of the curriculum that allows us to build on material and integrates clinical experiences into each year. I felt that this set up would allow me to feel as ready as possible to care for my patients as soon as I graduate.

Receiving the National Health Service Corps scholarship will allow me to practice without the burden of PA school debt. Without that burden, I can choose where I work based on the impact I am able to make rather than finances having to guide that decision.

Coming from an underserved background myself, I have always been passionate about caring for underserved populations and not allowing patient's life experiences, socioeconomic status or location dictate the quality of healthcare they receive. I worked hard to get to where I am and I hope to pay it forward in an effort to lessen the gap between those who have great care and those who have great need.

- Casey Balamut, Class of 2023



[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Tran](#)

## Job Listings

Do you have a PA position to list with your practice? Email [pa-info@ucdenver.edu](mailto:pa-info@ucdenver.edu) to add a listing to our website. You can find [job listings](#) on the Alumni webpage.



## Interested in precepting CHA/PA students?

Have you considered precepting CHA/PA students? Find out about the advantages of training up our next generation of PA students and find contact information on the [Preceptor section of our website](#).

### Contact Information:

CHA/PA Program  
Mail Stop F543  
13001 E. 17th Place, Room E7019  
Aurora, Colorado 80045

Phone: (303) 724-7963; Fax: (303) 724-1350

Email: [PA-info@ucdenver.edu](mailto:PA-info@ucdenver.edu)

Web: <https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/physician-assistant-program>

## Like & Follow us!

["Like" us on Facebook](#)

and

[Follow us on Instagram](#)

to keep up with the latest CHA/PA news!

---

**MOVING? NEW CONTACT INFORMATION?** Please email the office at [PA-Info@ucdenver.edu](mailto:PA-Info@ucdenver.edu) so that we can keep in touch with you!!

[Subscribe](#)

[Past Issues](#)

[Tran](#)



Child Health Associate /  
Physician Assistant Program

[unsubscribe from this list](#) | [update subscription preferences](#)