



## CHA/PA Newsletter

Winter at CHA/PA continues to be busy despite the arrival of cooler weather. The Spring Alumni Dinner date is set! A current student and a graduate were included in articles in both the Denver Post and the New York Times. CHA/PA faculty and students are engaged in oral health initiatives, fitness walks, charity events, and one graduate has even ventured to Alaska! Read on below to find out more.



## Spring Alumni Dinner- March 9th

The Silver Society is hosting our 2nd Alumni Dinner on Friday, March 9th, which will celebrate CHA/PA's 40 year involvement in child and family health. The dinner will take place at the Sheraton Downtown Denver Hotel, with doors opening at 6pm. A silent auction will benefit the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless Adopt-a-Home Project – we had so many wonderful auction items last year! Several preceptors associated with CHA/PA will be recognized during the dinner. Mark your calendar for a night including an excellent dinner and music – what a great way to reconnect with other alumni and students! For details on parking and directions, see our [Alumni webpage](#).

Invitations will be sent through the mail. Alumni – please be sure to

## A Graduate's Life in Alaska

“You must be crazy! I do not belong in Alaska.” This was **Kimberly Cray**'s initial response to a suggestion by a friend that she consider working in Alaska after graduation. Kimberly knew she wanted to leave her comfort zone and have an adventure after she graduated in May 2011. After researching Alaska, specifically Unalaska, Kimberly realized that she had found the right destination. Unalaska, which includes Unalaska Island and Amaknak Island, is 800 miles west of Anchorage and can only be accessed by boat or plane. It is 110 square miles, with only a small portion of that land being developed and inhabited, and offers only 6 miles of paved roads. As the largest fisheries port in the U.S. by volume of seafood caught, the local population includes 4000 residents that increases to 7000 during the busiest fishing seasons.

Four months into her arrival in Alaska, Kimberly is having the experience of a lifetime. In a typical day, she may treat a

email us any change of address to [PA-info@ucdenver.edu](mailto:PA-info@ucdenver.edu).



### **A Third Year Student's Perspective**

**Eleanor Perry** is a 5<sup>th</sup> generation Coloradoan who grew up in a small town on a Herford ranch in Carbondale. She spent much of her formative years outdoors enjoying kayaking, skiing, sledding, and backpacking. As a Cell & Molecular Biology major at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Eleanor initially planned on attending medical school. She learned of the physician assistant profession her junior year and changed gears. She considers choosing the PA profession the best decision she has ever made.

simple cold, a large fish hook impaled in someone's hand, a heart attack, and hypothermia. Oftentimes, patients must be medevacked off the island. "Being able to practice pediatrics, family practice, urgent and emergency care all in one place (usually all in one day!) is truly a unique situation, especially for a recent graduate," she notes. Occasionally, Kimberly's position requires venturing into animal medicine. With no full time veterinarian on the island, residents are forced to bring in their pets, mostly dogs, when crisis arises. The clinic does the best they can to treat them and consults with a veterinarian in Anchorage as needed.

Kimberly is pleasantly surprised at the number of great friends she has made so far in her community. Unalaska attracts people from all around the world – Japan, Russia, Philippines, and the Lower 48. With patients from all around the world, Kimberly is challenged to overcome many language and cultural barriers. She feels it is very important to relate to patients on

Eleanor is in the midst of her third year at CHA/PA, rotating to a new rotation each month in various settings from hospitals to rural family practices. CHA/PA is unique in that it offers a full third year of clinical experience, rather than a two year program. She has found that working in such diverse settings has given her a broad perspective on how providers treat the variety of patients that walk in their doors. “Every month has provided me with a different set of skills and new knowledge. All of this will only make me a better physician assistant,” she notes. While rotations can be challenging in the fast pace and knowledge they require, rotations do afford students the opportunity to explore various fields of medicine. For Eleanor, this exposure has helped her find her passion. She has spent two rotations in hospitalist settings, a field that she wasn’t

a personal level so that she can better treat them. Life in Alaska is not without its challenges. Kimberly has had to adjust to living in one of the rainiest places in the U.S. The weather, number of daylight hours, and isolation can lead to “island fever.”

All in all, Kimberly is growing and changing in a remote spot in Alaska. She observes, “working with my patients and colleagues has reinforced in my mind why I wanted to become a PA in the first place, and that is to help people.” Want to hear more about Kimberly’s experience in Alaska? Follow Kimberly’s blog at: [www.adventureunalaska.blogspot.com/](http://www.adventureunalaska.blogspot.com/)



**Anita Glicken Receives Research Achievement Award**

even aware of until her 3<sup>rd</sup> year at CHA/PA. Hospitalists provide medical care to acutely ill hospitalized patients. Eleanor loves the team aspect of hospitalists as well as working with complicated patients to whom she can provide complete patient care.

Eleanor is approaching her May graduation feeling a combination of excitement and apprehension. Leaving three years of structured life is intimidating, but she is excited to pursue her passions and hopefully find a hospitalist position after graduation.



### **Oral Health Initiatives**

CHA/PA is involved in multiple initiatives to promote oral health

Program Director **Anita D. Glicken, MSW**, was awarded the 2011 Research Achievement Award by the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA). The award, presented in November at PAEA's recent Annual Education Forum in New Orleans, goes either to an individual who has established a distinguished record of scholarly contributions to PA education over many years or who has authored a recent seminal work of importance to PA educators.

Glicken, who is nationally recognized for her grant-funded research and accomplishments, has served as principal investigator (PI) on multiple education and training grants. Program Director of the PA program at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, P. Eugene Jones, said of Glicken: "With a stellar record of over 100 peer-reviewed publications and several million dollars in competitive educational and research-related grant awards, she has consistently produced results and achieved remarkable success in a wide range of leadership and

care and education. Faculty member **Jonathan Bowser** directs the oral health curriculum for CHA/PA and was recently awarded an NCCPA Foundation grant to study the impact of the oral health curriculum on the clinical practice experiences of students. Additionally, Jon was recently appointed as the first PA representative to the Smiles for Life Steering Committee. [Smiles for Life](#) is a national oral health curriculum developed by the Society for Teachers of Family Medicine. Jon is passionate about oral health care – he remarks, “Oral disease is by far the most common chronic disease of early childhood and has an enormous impact on kids and adults, particularly those from underserved or at-risk populations. There is a national movement to get medical providers involved in basic oral screening and prevention and PAs

service roles for PAEA.”



### Welcoming Claudia Luna-Asturias

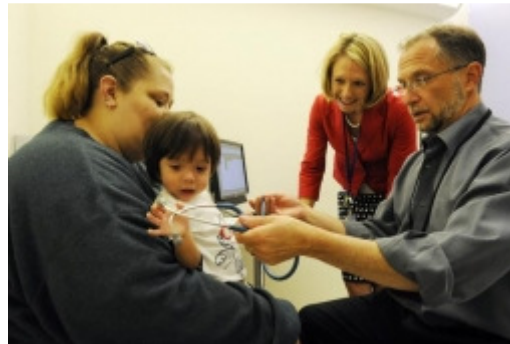
**Claudia Luna-Asturias** is the newest member of the CHA/PA faculty. Claudia, a native of Guatemala, spent the last 13 years in Guatemala directing the Counseling Center at “Universidad del Valle” where she also taught in the Department of Psychology. During her tenure there, she helped develop emergency psychological support networks to provide relief during the Agatha and volcanic eruption disasters in the country. Previously, she worked at Children’s Hospital Colorado in Denver as a bilingual social worker in the Emergency Department & Child Health Clinic for sixteen years.

Claudia and her husband, Edwin Asturias, M.D., a Senior Investigator and Director

are an important part of this transition.”

Jon is also able to use other platforms to promote oral health care as he is the PA Profession Representative for the national oral health initiative with the American Academy of Pediatrics, as well as an oral health speaker for the American Academy of Physician Assistants. Jon and Program Director Anita Glicken have led oral health presentations and trainings to colleagues at numerous venues over the last year, including the CO Assoc. for School-Based Health Care Conference in Aurora, the National Oral Health Alliance Colloquium in Washington, D.C., the PA Education Assoc. Education Forum in New Orleans, the Collaborating Across Borders Conference in Tucson, and the Assoc. for Medical Education in Europe in Vienna. At the PAEA conference, participants

for Latin America for the Center for Global Health, and two of their four children are excited to be back in Colorado. Their older sons stayed in Guatemala for medical school. Claudia will be co-teaching the Parenting Module and Psycho-Social Behavior with Kyle Tick, as well as assisting in Spanish courses. She desires to support our vision for diversity, emphasizing the importance of valuing the wealth of culture in a global community.



### CHA/PA In the News

CHA/PA graduate **Becca Sachs**, Class of 2011, was included in a [Denver Post story](#) profiling in-demand careers. Becca works in the endocrinology department of Children's Hospital Colorado and considers this position to be her dream job. Eighty percent of jobs created or



not only had the opportunity to learn more about the importance of oral health care, but were also able to perform fluoride treatments on local children.

These initiatives are so important because PAs are at the front end of delivery and health care systems. PAs focus on prevention, and patients view PAs as trusted agents of behavior change counseling.



### Graduates Needed

Faculty Member Kyle Tick is looking for graduates to speak to current students on both parenting

forecast to be created in CO in 2011 and 2012 come from three sectors, health care being one of them. The Denver Post notes that health care specialties that are in demand include doctors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and surgical technicians. Additionally, Money magazine and Salary.com rank the PA profession as one of the best jobs in the country based on salary, employment prospects, and quality of life. What a wonderful time to be part of the PA profession!



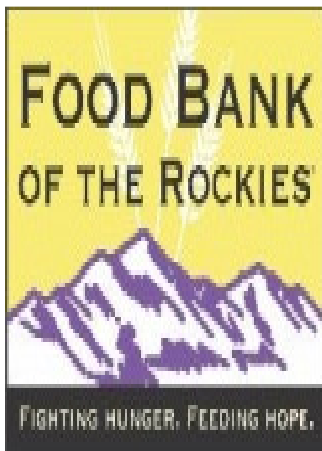
### Reaching Out to Teens

During the summer of 2010, **Katy Smith**, Class of 2012, along with two other medical students created a text-chat program where teens could text their questions about sex and get quick,



and mental health topics. Classes will start early February and run through May. Please contact Kyle at [kyle.tick@ucdenver.edu](mailto:kyle.tick@ucdenver.edu) for more information.

reliable, scientific based answers to their questions. They constructed this application in conjunction with Planned Parenthood in order to provide safe, trustworthy information to teens in an anonymous manner. The program that was created is called "In Case You're Curious" (ICYC). It was recently featured in an [article in the New York Times](#). This is a great example of how our students are advocating for and positively impacting the needs of the community.



### **CHA/PA Food Drive**

Between the CHA/PA students, staff, and faculty, we were able to donate four large boxes



### **LEADS & Wellness Walking**

The LEADS class of 2013 at the School of Medicine selected as their fall group project a Wellness Walking Path. The Wellness Walking



### **CH/PA on Facebook**

Did you know that the CHA/PA Program has a facebook page? "[Like](#)" us on [Facebook](#) to see what is new!

of items to the [Food Bank of the Rockies](#) just in time for the holidays. Food Bank of the Rockies works in Northern Colorado and Wyoming, providing food supplies to more than 1100 hunger-relief programs. Thanks to all those who participated!

Path provides the Anschutz Medical Campus community with a visible and permanent walking path that highlights the commitment of the campus to worksite health and wellness. The hope is to create a backbone for the creation of more paths that will spread throughout the campus.

#### Contact Information:

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Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday

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**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!!



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