

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

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## CHA/PA Newsletter

Read on to learn more about students and faculty involvement in pediatric care, the Rural track, outreach programs, and much more!



### A Chinese Doctor Pursuing the PA Profession

Howard He had a lot of unique experiences before joining CHA/PA. He attended Wuhan University in China and practiced as a medical doctor at Jingmen Hospital for several years. After



### My Experience Learning About Critically Ill Children

Kids are resilient, exciting and terrifying – especially when they are sick. Starting in the first year of PA school, I've learned how to take care of critically ill children in a series of clinical and didactic

moving to the US, he completed a biotechnology master's degree at Texas A&M, which led him to a medical researcher position at Houston Medical Center. He enjoyed the field of research, but longed to return to clinical patient care. Howard started to volunteer at the hospital to garner exposure to various fields, which is where he learned of the PA profession. Howard began his PA education journey in June 2014. He has experienced some challenges in clinic as a non-native English speaker. It has become easier over time, but the move from China to the US with vastly different cultures and languages was difficult. He sees his third clinical year as a wonderful opportunity to grow in his communication skills. Howard also manages to balance his time between his family and PA school. As a father of two boys, Jeremy and Jonathan, he has had to work hard at devoting time to both areas. He has found tremendous support through his family as well as his classmates.

He notes, "When our class goes through a hard time, our friendships become more solid." As Howard looks ahead toward graduating in 2017, he is focused in his vision. His father died of gastric carcinoma when he was teenager, so he is certain he would like to help people through the painful diagnosis of cancer. He

instruction in the intensive care unit at Children's Hospital Colorado. I am privileged to be in the first cohort of an innovative program designed for PA students, aptly called the Pediatric Critical and Acute Care Longitudinal Experience.

I have been challenged to think critically about assessing and caring for the hospitalized pediatric patient. I am benefiting from personalized feedback on physical exam skills, critical thinking, forming a thoughtful assessment and plan and oral presentation. In the clinical year, pediatric rotations in primary care, inpatient medicine and emergency medicine prepared me for a final rotation in the PICU.

When I started PA school, I couldn't have imagined ever feeling confident in doing a 5 minute oral patient presentation to an ICU attending physician and 10-person multidisciplinary team, but last week I did it! This experience has enhanced my education and shown me how challenging and fulfilling it is to take care of sick kids. I look forward to starting my career as a pediatric acute care PA.

Lindsey Meyer  
Class of 2016

hopes to work in an oncology unit at a hospital or large clinic.



### CAPA Scholarship Recipient

I was very thankful to be awarded the scholarship from the Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants. The scholarship was designed to recognize students who show dedication to the PA profession through leadership, scholarship, PA promotion, service, competence and professionalism. Our involvement in professional organizations like CAPA and AAPA along with our community contributions were all considered during the application process. I had experience volunteering at my local emergency department as well as at organizations like Camp Wapiyapi, a respite for children with cancer and their siblings. Since becoming a PA student, I have provided free health screenings at the stock show and plan to volunteer at Children's Hospital and the Dawn Clinic. I



### Rotating at a Guatemalan Clinic

In September, I spent my elective month abroad in Guatemala. The clinic I worked in, Trifinio, is part of a co-funded project between the University of Colorado and Banasa, a major Banana plantation in Guatemala. The goal of Trifinio is to offer affordable healthcare to the low-income rural population, while also promoting medical and Spanish language education through student and resident rotations. The clinic is a beautiful, open-air style facility located on a well-kept, lush banana plantation in rural western Guatemala. A typical day at clinic ran from 8am-5pm. I would see 15-25 patients per day, with guidance from Dr. Tony Bolaños or 3rd year residents when needed. Patients presented with a wide variety of medical problems, some unusual and others more common. A few of the more exotic presentations I worked with included machete lacerations, motorcycle trauma, tropical rashes, Chikungunya, Dengue, parasitic gastroenteritis,

have also taken a leadership role as an Interprofessional Education Representative to help facilitate some of our coursework and collaboration among healthcare teams. This first year of PA school has been challenging, but also very rewarding. I had a difficult fall semester personally, which affected my schoolwork, but I continued to remain committed and dedicated to the program. As the semester ended, I not only performed better than expected, but also learned a lot about myself and balancing life and school, much like I will have to do as a working PA. My academic endeavors in addition to all of these experiences were included in my application for the committee's selection. I have many hopes and dreams for my future and this scholarship is a stepping stone along the way, I feel incredibly grateful for the support.

Candace Bassett, Class of 2018



**Health Assessments at the Stock Show**

and Osteogenesis Imperfecta. One of the challenges I experienced during the rotation was the limited availability of testing. With only certain tools at our disposal (i.e. CBC, Cr, K+, UA, ultrasound), and without xray or culture capability, it was more difficult to form accurate diagnoses. However, with focused history taking, adept exam skills, and of course with the support of the medical staff, I like to think that I was able to help many patients during my time in Central America.

Looking back over all of my experiences in the last year, Guatemala has been by far my favorite rotation. Not only did I get the opportunity to work in a rural underserved setting and practice medical Spanish, but I was also able to travel to some breathtaking exotic locations during weekend excursions, and meet many warm and welcoming Guatemaltecos. I highly recommend this once-in-a-lifetime experience to future 3rd year CHAPAs.

Tom Fisher, Class of 2015

The AHEC Western Stock Show gave me, as a physician assistant student, the opportunity to interact with people from rural communities through performing health assessments and educating people on their current health status. Having the opportunity to educate people on things such as what is a normal BMI, what is a normal blood glucose, what is oral health, and much more was a wonderful opportunity. I felt even as a first year student, I was able to use my training and knowledge to educate people on how to make healthier decisions regarding their daily activities. Building a strong rapport with people allowed me to identify what barriers people have to making healthier choices and allowed me to personalize my recommendations to realistic changes they could make. Even in the short time I spent with each person, by identifying their unique barriers, I was able to support them in identifying ways they could start their journey toward better health. It was eye opening learning that many people lack the access to medical or dental services in their community. This experience allowed me to touch people's lives in a positive way, and it personally reminded me of how critical it is to educate our rural populations regarding their health.

Holly Welsford, Class of 2018



## Volunteering at Food Bank of the Rockies

Our Silver Society Community Service group has been working to expand our service past the sheltered comfort of campus activities. The Food Bank of the Rockies warehouse provides donated goods to a number of local food banks and pantries as well as various programs, such as Kids Café and Totes of Hope for children and seniors. On February 12th, thirteen 2nd year students, Program Director Jon Bowser, and faculty member Joyce Nieman volunteered time at the food bank. Our task that day was in reclamation where we sorted donated protein items into smaller organized boxes that would then be distributed as needed to their satellite distribution centers. In a 3 hour span we were able to repackage 330 boxes (8,400 lbs of food!). It was such a success and the site is so accommodating to large groups. Our hope is to volunteer annually as a student group with faculty and staff in

## CHA/PA in the News

Faculty member David Eckhardt was selected to serve on the PAEA Assessment Council.

Faculty member Jacqueline Sivahop had an article published in the PAEA Networker, "[Creating a Centralized Schedule for Clinical Sites](#)".

Faculty member Rebecca Maldonado served as a facilitator at PAEA's Pando Workshop on remediation.

Faculty member Jacqueline Sivahop led a clinical coordinators session at PAEA's Pando Workshops.

order to continue to foster inter-program communication while giving back to the community we live in.

Whitney Bowser, Class of 2017



### Educational Scholars Program of APA

Faculty member Rebecca Maldonado was selected as the first (and only) PA to be a scholar in the Educational Scholars Program of the Academic Pediatric Association (APA). Rebecca will start this prestigious 3–4 year program with a trip to the APA meeting in Baltimore this April.



### Fall Alumni Event

Our Fall Alumni Event will be on October 7th



*Faculty member Joyce Nieman precepting at University Hospital*



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details to come!

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