



CHA/PA Newsletter

Read on to hear about the class of 2027's summer block and White Coat Ceremony, welcome new faculty member Peggy Walsh Sheryka, learn about recent alumni and faculty accomplishments and our new Gericare scholarship and track; and see photos from our fall alumni events. Also, make sure you are on the lookout for a save the date for the Spring AAPA conference coming to Denver!



The Class of 2027 is off to a Great Start!

As you know, we welcomed the CHA/PA class of 2027 to campus for Summer Block on July 1st 2024. The class of 2027 made quite an impression on us. A few of their accomplishments included: completing the injection workshop,



Welcome Peggy Walsh Sheryka to the CHA/PA Faculty

On October 1st, we welcomed Peggy Walsh Sheryka, MS, PA-C to the CHA/PA faculty. Peggy has been a PA for the past 14 years, primarily practicing clinically in plastic and reconstructive surgery with the

conducting a well-child exam workshop with Dave the Minion, participating in Summer Book Club with CHA/PA DEIA leadership on historical injustices in medicine, completing the suture workshop, hosting a CHA/PA table at the K-12 STEAM Exposure Day, and bonding over yummy food.



We also can't forget that they successfully completed the didactic portion of Summer Block, which culminated in the White Coat Ceremony, on August 16th 2024. Our first-year students were joined by friends and family for the ceremony as they listened to sage advice from our new School of Medicine Dean, John Sampson, MD; and Faculty Member Jacqueline Sivahop, EdD, PA-C. Jacqueline spoke about the power of the stethoscope, and how it "facilitates a universal relationship and partnership of trust between patient and healthcare provider that transcends all races, ethnicities, genders, ages, abilities, and religious beliefs". It was a meaningful speech that she worked on during her doctoral studies and had the

University of Colorado. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Health and Exercise Science, her Master of Science in Food Science and Human Nutrition from Colorado State University, and completed her Master of Science in PA Studies at Baylor College of Medicine.

Most recently, Peggy has been with the CU plastic and reconstructive surgery team. A majority of the patients she worked with were undergoing care for oncologic reconstruction, trauma, or undergoing gender affirming care. This specialty provided her with a unique opportunity to develop relationships with patients and help them rebuild their lives physically, emotionally and mentally, helping them to feel whole again.

Peggy has an interest in student and provider wellness and in PA leadership and advocacy. She was fortunate to have significant leadership mentors early in her career and hopes to provide support and encouragement to help foster the development of leadership skills in PA students early in their careers. Peggy currently serves on the AAPA Board of Directors as Director/First Vice Speaker of the House of Delegates.

opportunity to share during the
CHA/PA White Coat Ceremony. Enjoy
the photos from this summer and the
event.



CHA/PA Faculty Features

CHA/PA Program Director and faculty member, Jonathan Bowser, MS, PA-C was a guest on the podcast, "Charting Pediatrics", on the Evolution of APPs. The two University of Colorado leaders who continue to help keep our APP programs among the top ranked in the country were tapped for this podcast. Jonathan, in his role as Associate Dean of Physician Assistant Studies, the Section Head of Pediatrics, and an associate professor, partnered with Jill Marks, NP, the Specialty Director of the Acute Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Program at the University of Colorado



Peggy's roots in education started when she completed a graduate teaching fellowship prior to entering PA school, and has continued through her years of being a clinical preceptor for the CHA/PA program. She loves clinical teaching at the bedside and in the OR and helping students feel comfortable in procedural settings, gain confidence in subspecialty fields, and build upon the skills that are foundational to being a PA.

Please help us welcome Peggy to CHA/PA! We are grateful she has joined CHA/PA faculty to help train the next generation of PAs and share her knowledge and experience with our students.



Celebrating CHA/PA Alumni Recognized by the Pediatrics Instructor Recognition Committee

College of Nursing and an inpatient nurse practitioner for the section of pediatric neurology for this podcast episode.

Over the last few decades, the roles of nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs), also known as advanced practice providers (APPs), have greatly expanded to touch even more patient–family lives. They are an essential part of the care we provide, and their roles have evolved over time. In this episode, the crucial part these roles play in our medical system and how that might continue to evolve in the future is explored.

Some highlights from this episode include:

- Background on the creation of NPs and PAs
- The ways these roles have changed over time
- The impact APPs make on patient care
- The role APPs will play in healthcare in the future

[Listen Here](#) (25 minutes) for Jonathan and Jill's input on this important topic.



Faculty Member, Jacqueline Sivahop, EdD, PA–C published "Autism

As you may recall from the CHA/PA Summer Newsletter, 4 CHA/PA Alumni were selected by the Department of Pediatrics Instructor Recognition program in the Spring. The instructors were selected for making substantive contributions to the university above and beyond their primary clinical roles. In mid–September recipients were honored at the Instructor Recognition Program dinner. CHA/PA alumni included: Linsey Weller (Class of 2005), Brandon Nuechterlein (Class of 2009), Melissa Widener (Class of 2011) and Danielle Mashburn (Class of 2011). Their accomplishments include:

Linsey Weller, PA–C was recognized for developing an Acting Intern Pathway for PA students interested in hospital medicine. Brandon Nuechterlein, MPAS, PA–C was recognized for his impact at the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research consortium (CIBTR), allowing him to help shape policy in the US to improve and increase access to care for underrepresented patients. Melissa Widener, PA–C was recognized for her leadership of the Advanced Practice Professional Development Committee, where she led the development of a preceptor training curriculum and workshop offered to APPs. Danielle Mashburn, PA–C developed the Pediatric Critical and Acute Care Longitudinal Experience (PCACLE) – a first in the nation educational track for acute care–oriented physician assistant students that integrates a didactic pathway and clinical rotation series in

Identification and Referral: How Best to Equip Physician Assistant Students for Successful Practice", with Leslie Blome, EdD, CCC-SLP in the Journal of Physician Assistant Education. The purpose of this study was to understand PA students' perspectives about what would help them feel more confident to identify autism and talk with families about it. The qualitative case study extricated themes from document review and semi-structured interviews with 9 PA students and the program director (PD), from one PA program.

This study highlighted the importance of incorporating robust information about autism into PA training programs. Students wanted role-plays and experiential activities to supplement the basic autism information they received from their didactic lecture. Embedding autism into the curriculum can develop students' critical thinking skills while addressing the rising prevalence of this condition. Given the importance of targeted early intervention for this population and the expanding role of PAs in primary care, it is incumbent on PA education programs to provide students with the knowledge they need to provide autism care with confidence and compassion. Congratulations to Leslie and Jacqueline on the publication of this important article. If you would like to read more, you can find the text of the article [here](#):

the Children's Hospital PICU into all 3 years of the CHA/PA program.

Program Director, Jonathan Bowser, MS, PA-C and Assistant Program Director, Tanya Fernandez, MS, PA-C attended the dinner to listen to these amazing accomplishments and lend their congratulations to our CHA/PA Alumni.



Fall Alumni Events Recap

Fall was the season for Alumni Events. The CU Anschutz Alumni Office hosted an All Alumni Celebration at the end of September. The celebration was an opportunity for alums from all health professions to connect or reconnect with each other and to learn more about what's happening at the Anschutz campus. The All Alumni Celebration is held with the CU School of Medicine in conjunction with the Milestone Reunions. Members of the CHA/PA class of 2014 took the opportunity to connect during the All Alumni Celebration for their 10-year reunion. Program Director, Jonathan Bowser, MS, PA-C, was able to join in this fellowship with 9 alum from the Class of 2014. A great time was had by all. The following week, CHA/PA, in partnership with the CU Anschutz Alumni Office held its Annual Fall Reception at the Wynkoop Brewing Company.



Gericare Track and Scholarship Awardees

CHA/PA takes pride in evolving and preparing our graduates to serve some of the biggest areas of need in healthcare. One of those needs is in Geriatric Care. Two students, Robyn Farrell, PA-S2, and Kaitlyn Rooney, PA-S2, are members of the Geriatric track and are learning more about caring for older adults through weekly classroom sessions. They will take part in inter-professional experiential learning during brief clinical sessions with clinicians from the other professions represented in the track. The other health professions represented in the track are nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language, dental medicine, pharmacy, and social work.

This fall, all the participants were recognized during the Rocky Mountain Geriatrics Conference that took place on campus. Amy Akerman, MPAS, PA-C, the CHA/PA faculty coordinator for this track and the consortium of faculty, have worked together to create the didactic and clinical curriculum. We are excited to see how this program will impact the future of healthcare.



For the 2nd year in a row, we were pleased to host the CHA/PA Fall Alumni Reception after a few year hiatus. This year we had an even larger turnout with alumni that spanned over decades, recent graduates, current CHA/PA students and CHA/PA faculty and staff. In addition to good food, drinks and fellowship, we also hosted an exciting raffle, as everyone loves some good CHA/PA swag. If you didn't get a chance to attend and would like to see event photos, click [here](#):

Stay tuned for Save the Date information for our next Alumni event that will be held in conjunction with the Spring AAPA conference in Denver. We look forward to seeing you there!



CHA/PA Summer Student Rotations in Guatemala

This summer some of our 2nd year PA students had the opportunity to travel to Guatemala for clinical rotations. Coordinated by Adjunct Faculty member, Claudia Luna–Asturias, LCSW, CHA/PA sent our largest group of students since the inception of the program. Seventeen students participated and were divided among 5 groups. The first group left June 1st and the last group returned at the end of August, which concluded a successful summer clinical immersion abroad.

Each group of students spent two weeks at a home stay while attending Spanish school, then two weeks in Trifinio clinic, a rural clinic that hosts CHA/PA students every summer. The clinic experience offered students the opportunity for several different skills, including: providing prenatal care, point of care ultrasounds, taking histories, reading labs, and engaging in home visits! Students navigated communication barriers and expanded on cultural experiences while providing compassionate patient care.

We are thankful for our continued connections with the Trifinio (Funsalud) clinic that provides this experience for students every



Aimee Bernard, PhD awarded the Chancellor's Teaching Award

CHA/PA has a number of adjunct faculty that help make the program what it is. Aimee Bernard, PhD is one of our adjunct faculty and we are proud to share that she received the Chancellor's Teaching Recognition Award this past spring. Here's a Q&A to help everyone get to know Aimee a bit better.

1. Where are you originally from?
Saint Paul, Minnesota
2. Where did you attend professional school? I got my PhD at the University of Rochester in Rochester, NY
3. When did you start as Adjunct Faculty in the CHA/PA program? I've been teaching immunology in the CHA/PA program for 6 years starting in the fall of 2018.
4. What lecture topics do you provide? I teach the

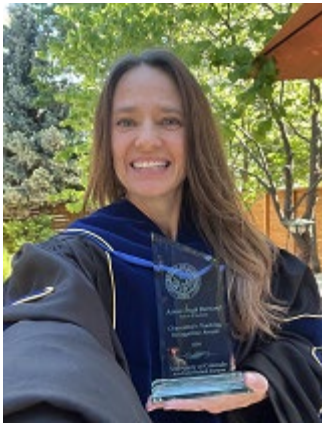
foundational concepts of immunology and clinical relevancy of the immune system to a wide variety of students across the CU Anschutz medical campus, including PA students, medical students, dental students and graduate students.

5. What is your favorite thing about lecturing to PA students? PA students as a whole tend to be very curious and truly interested in learning. They all seem to embrace the "growth mindset" for learning and are invested in working together to build knowledge. They are – as a whole – a fabulous group of students to teach. It's rewarding as an educator to teach students who are curious and interested in learning.
6. Can you share a little bit about the Chancellor's Teaching Recognition Award you received in the spring? I was honored to receive the Chancellor's Teaching Recognition Award for the CU School of Medicine in May 2024. The nominees are named by the school-wide student governance groups and a committee in each school, comprised of a student representative, a faculty representative, and an administrator, selects the winner. Teaching is my passion; I am thankful for the opportunity to teach so many amazing students on the CU Anschutz medical campus!

summer and Dr. Bolaños who supervised all the students until the end.

Enjoy these photos of our students practicing medicine and adventuring through Guatemala!





Congratulations, Aimee! We are grateful to have you as part of the CHA/PA team.



Have an Idea for our Newsletter?

We love to hear from our alumni that are doing unique things in the PA field. If you are interested in being a part of a future alumni spotlight in our newsletter, please email pa-info@ucdenver.edu and we will follow-up with you.



Interested in precepting CHA/PA students?

There are so many advantages to training our next generation of PA students. If you are considering being a preceptor to CHA/PA students check out this area of our website [Preceptor section](#) and contact us today!



Job Listings!

Do you know that we have an active job listings page on our website? If you are looking for a new opportunity, you can find [job listings](#) on the Alumni webpage.

If you have an open PA position in your practice, we are happy to post the listing to our website. Email pa-info@ucdenver.edu to add a listing to our website.

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