



CHA/PA Newsletter

Read on to hear about our Fall Alumni Event and our Alumni Award winners; learn about recent faculty, student, and alumni accomplishments, and a recap of the annual PAEA Conference in San Diego. Buy some CHA/PA merchandise from our Pop-up Shop and don't forget to share the link to register for our next information session in January 2026.



Recap of CHA/PA Fall Alumni Event and Alumni Awards

We are so excited to share a recap from our annual CHA/PA Alumni event held on October 24th, in partnership with the Alumni Association at the Wynkoop Brewing Company. Over 100 current students, faculty, alumni and guests gathered to enjoy each other's company and celebrate alumni achievements. Awardees were recognized in the following categories:



CHA/PA Faculty makes a Splash at PAEA 2025 in San Diego, CA

Two groups of CHA/PA faculty presented at this year's Physician

Rising Star Award: Honors grads from the past seven years who've shown innovation, creativity, and excellence in service, clinical care, education, leadership, or research.

Alumni Achievement Award: Honors grads who truly embody the mission of CHA/PA through leadership and excellence in their work and service.

Henry Silver Award: Honors an alumnus at the culmination of their career. These alumni have been practicing for over 25 years and have made a significant contribution to the profession, either as an educator, clinician, leader, or administrator, and have demonstrated ongoing support of the CU CHA/PA Program.



Congratulations again to these 4 Alumni:

Rising Star Award winner – Haley Briggs, PA-C | Class of 2019, whose impact in hospital medicine has been nothing short of extraordinary. She mentors CHA/PA students through

Assistant Education Association (PAEA) conference held in San Diego, California. Jonathan Bowser, MS, PA-C and Jacqueline Sivahop, EdD, PA-C, shared an educational innovation focused on the science of learning in PA education. Guided by a curriculum created by cognitive science experts, Dr. Doug Larson and Dr. Carolyn Dufault from WashU Medicine, Jonathan and Jacqueline have adapted a curricular thread that they introduce to our 1st year students focused on evidence-based strategies for durable learning that students can utilize during their PA education and beyond. After 8 years of providing this curriculum, their presentation focused on sharing the "Learning to Learn" curriculum, the barriers they have encountered, and the strategies they have used for successful implementation.

Faculty members Rachel Hess, Roberta Knott and Tanya Fernandez conducted a 90-minute workshop at PAEA. "Prescription for Success: Active Learning Strategies for Medication Safety" was featured in the Innovations in Teaching category, highlighting CHA/PA's creative and clinically-relevant format presenting the topic of medication safety. Several attendees, including faculty from PA and Pharmacy programs nationwide are planning to incorporate the CHA/PA format into their curricula next year!

the CHANGE track, guiding them through a structured 3 year curriculum in adult critical care.

Alumni Achievement Award winner – Stacey Gundry, PA-C | Class of 2017, has dedicated her career to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Children's Hospital Colorado where she has made a profound impact as a gifted educator, and a thoughtful leader. She has spent five years optimizing the APP clinical schedule to improve work-life balance for her colleagues and recently, stepped into the role of Lead APP—shaping the future of her team.

Alumni Achievement Award winner – Stephanie Shea, PA-C | Class of 2009, currently serves as the Clinical Medical Director for Child Neurology, one of only two APPs in the hospital to hold such a role. She's also a key contributor to numerous clinical trials and research initiatives focused on rare pediatric neurological conditions.

Henry Silver Award winner – Cindy Tanner, PA-C | Class of 1972, and a graduate of the very first CHA/PA class in 1972. Cindy has spent her career living the mission of this program: providing compassionate, expert care to vulnerable children and giving back through teaching and service. Even in retirement, Cindy continues to serve—lecturing on sentinel events in child abuse,



We are proud of the impact CHA/PA Faculty has made at PAEA over the years and look forward to our participation for many years to come.



CHA/PA Faculty Members Recognized by the Academy of Medical Educators

The Academy of Medical Educators (AME) is one of the many venues in which CU School of Medicine aims to increase its educational quality, community, collaboration and innovation. The AME has a membership of 294 with 58 members from the Department of Pediatrics.

There are 3 tracks, Teaching Track, Curriculum Development and Instructional Design Track; and the Educational Leadership Track. The Academy fosters dedicated educators committed to enhancing their own teaching and promoting excellence in medical education throughout the University of Colorado School of Medicine. It is also a gateway to a

interviewing prospective students, and contributing as a valued member of our Alumni Council.

If you know these individuals, please congratulate them. We are excited to continue recognizing CHA/PA alumni with these awards for years to come. We hope you can join us at next year's alumni event as we look forward to it being even bigger next year.



Faculty Member, Jacqueline Sivahop, Publishes Article in JPAE

Jacqueline Sivahop, EdD, PA-C and Kristin Broadfoot, PhD, authored “Reframing Student Burnout in Physician Assistant Education: A Qualitative Exploration into Conceptual Models”. The article explores PA student definitions and experiences with burnout and well-being, burnout prevention strategies, and suggested resources. The study

host of professional and personal rewards. Academy members are often sought after by colleagues and departmental leaders for their expertise on educational matters.

The Department of Pediatrics had 17 new members recognized by the AME and welcomed to one of 3 tracks.

CHA/PA faculty recognized include:

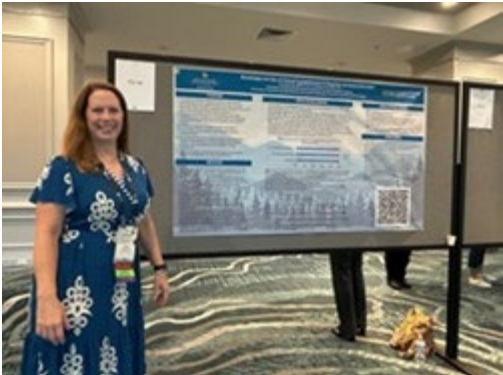
- Kelsey Dougherty, MMSci, PA-C | Fellow, Curriculum Development and Instructional Design Track
- Kate LaPorta, MHS, PA-C | Fellow, Curriculum Development and Instructional Design Track
- Tanya Fernandez, MS, PA-C | Legacy, Teaching Track
- Jackie Sivahop, EdD, PA-C | Legacy, Teaching Track
- Peggy Walsh Sheryka, MS, PA-C | Associate, Teaching Track



These AME Inductees were honored at the New Member Induction Ceremony in mid-August. Our faculty’s commitment to support the promotion of educational excellence, innovation, and community helps elevate the educational experience that we provide here in the CHA/PA program.

emphasizes that student burnout among PA students is increasingly recognized and integrated into accreditation standards. While burnout has been studied for decades, evolving societal expectations—especially post-pandemic—call for updated conceptual models. The research suggests burnout arises from tensions between personal and professional expectations during their professional identity formation. To address this, programs should provide activities supporting professional identity development, diverse resources, and open discussions. With faculty guidance, students can self-assess, reflect, and create personalized prevention strategies, ultimately fostering resilience throughout training and into their careers.

You can read the in-depth article [here](#):



Faculty Member, Amy



CHA/PA Students awarded Prestigious Scholarships

CHA/PA students Renata Bath (PA-S3) and Rhyane Loman (PA-S2) were awarded the Navy’s Health Services Collegiate Program (HSCP) and the National Health Services Corps Scholarship (NHSC) respectively.

Renata Bath (PA-S3) received the HSCP, through the Navy. A few CHA/PA grads had gone through it, and hearing their experiences got her excited. The chance to care for such a diverse patient population, work across different levels of acuity, and maybe even practice in another country someday, was an opportunity she couldn’t pass up. Renata knew she always wanted to work in the medical field, and becoming a PA was something she aimed for because it lets her really connect with people. She loves being part of someone’s care, hearing their stories, and getting to work with patients from all kinds of backgrounds. It felt like the perfect mix of medicine, teamwork, and meaningful impact. This scholarship has opened so many doors, not just in the Navy but for her long-term career. It’s given her financial relief, confidence, and a bigger sense of purpose. She’s also really looking forward to building new friendships and growing in a

Akerman, appointed as a PAEA Research Fellow

Congratulations to Amy Akerman, MPAS, PA-C, and PhD Candidate, for her appointment to the 2025–2026 American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) – Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) Research Fellows Cohort. The AAPA–PAEA Fellowship provides protected research time, access to mentorship, professional development seminars, and networking opportunities with prominent medical research organizations.

Amy is a PhD Candidate in the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs Educational Leadership, Research, and Policy program. Her research explores the impact of Colorado’s 2023 scope of practice (SOP) law on physician assistants (PAs). Using a mixed-methods approach, the study will examine whether expanded SOP has changed how Colorado PAs practice medicine, including patient volume, procedures performed, and medications prescribed. Through anonymous surveys and one-on-one interviews, Amy will gather PA experiences to assess how broader SOP impacts patient access to care and uncover any remaining barriers to increasing a PAs SOP. Amy’s findings aim to guide educators, policymakers, and clinicians in shaping effective SOP policies, with potential implications for evaluating similar laws nationwide. We look forward to Amy’s final conclusions and presentation at next year’s PAEA conference.

completely different environment. Through this entire process, Renata says she’s been incredibly grateful for the support of the program, and her family and friends and she’s thankful and excited for what’s ahead.

Rhyane Lowman (PA-S2) received the NHSC that pays tuition and living expenses in exchange for 2 years of service in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA). The HPSA locations are all over the country, so she’s grateful to be able to work with an underserved population after graduation. Through the program, she will have the opportunity to practice in family medicine, pediatric primary care, behavioral health, or women’s health to fulfill her service commitment. Rhyane decided to pursue the PA profession because it offers the perfect balance of patient centered care, medical problem solving, and the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with diverse communities and other healthcare professionals. Receiving this scholarship has had a significant impact on Rhyane’s education because it has helped to ease the financial burden, allowing her to fully focus on her training. Earning this scholarship has reinforced her confidence and motivation as she continues working toward becoming a PA. Rhyane reflects that she has felt incredibly supported by her classmates, faculty, and the NHSC scholarship community, and she’s thankful to learn alongside classmates and faculty who inspire and challenge her every day.



CHA/PA Alumna, Cindy Tanner, featured in CU Anschutz 2nd Annual History Day

Our 2nd annual History Day was a wonderful reminder to celebrate the history of the CU Anschutz campus and those who have advanced our mission. On November 18th, CU Anschutz welcomed faculty, staff and students to the Elliman Conference Center for this event dedicated to honoring the groundbreaking “firsts” that have shaped our campus and its legacy. Cindy Tanner, CHA/PA Class of 1972, a trailblazer in the inaugural CHA/PA cohort participated in a discussion with other campus trailblazers led by former dean of the School of Medicine and distinguished professor of pediatrics, Richard Krugman, MD.

The discussion encompassed important moments, including the Denver Chromosome Project and early breakthroughs in human genetics, as well as the pioneering of the Nurse Practitioner and CHA/PA programs. In addition to Cindy, another trailblazer, alumni Maddie Nichols, BSN, CPNP, Class of 1967, reflected on their experiences entering new professions, the



CHA/PA Alumni awarded Rising Star Award

We are proud to celebrate Molly McCullough, CHA/PA Class of 2022, for receiving the Rising Star Award at the Office of Advanced Practice Annual Conference earlier this fall. Since graduating in 2022, Molly completed the APP Fellowship in Hospital Medicine at University of Colorado Hospital and now serves as a full-time faculty instructor.

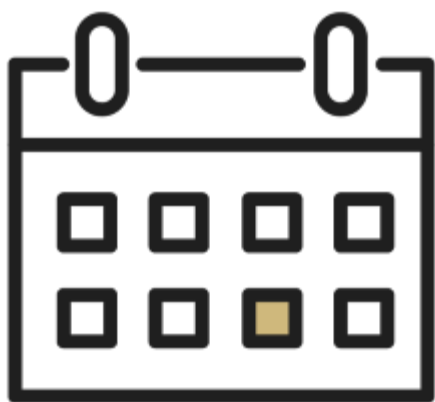
Molly was drawn to the PA profession for its focus on direct patient care and collaborative practice. Her passion grew while volunteering at the DAWN Clinic, where she saw firsthand the impact providers have on patients’ lives.

Currently, Molly is leading a Quality Improvement project aimed at improving communication between hospitalists and primary care providers during patient discharge—an effort designed to enhance care and reduce readmissions. She also works extensively with the Medicine Transplant team, a role she finds deeply rewarding.

A proud Colorado native, Molly enjoys

challenges they faced and the importance of never giving up. We would like to thank Cindy for representing CHA/PA and the PA profession so well.

Watch a recording of the event [here](#):



CHA/PA Winter Information Session

CHA/PA is hosting our 2nd Admissions Information Session of the 25/26 academic year on Friday, January 23, 2026 from 1 – 3pm MST via Zoom.

Please share this information with anyone that may be interested in the CHA/PA program or the PA profession. Those interested can register at this [link](#):

hiking, camping, and skiing in the Rocky Mountains whenever she can.



Congratulations, Molly, we are so proud of you.



CHA/PA Merchandise Pop Up Shop Open

We are excited to announce that our 2025 CHA/PA pop-up shop is open from December 8th through December 19th to purchase merchandise. You will see some of our most popular past items, AND they have the new branding (CU Anschutz – Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant

Program). Items ordered will be delivered around the end of January, 2026.

You can shop at this [link](#):

Happy Shopping!



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

MOVING? NEW CONTACT INFORMATION? Please email the office at PA-Info@ucdenver.edu so that we can keep in touch with you!!



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