



CHA/PA Newsletter

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



Guatemala Rotation

This summer 13 of our CHA/PA students completed clinical rotations in Guatemala and we are happy to say this program was a success! Students participated in a two-week Spanish Immersion where they attended in-depth Spanish classes in the city of Quetzaltenango and completed a two week Clinical Rotation at the Trifinio Clinic (a site staffed and supervised by CU), pictured below.



Welcome, New Staff!

Miguel Perez Portillo and Danielle Thompson are the newest additions to our team. Learn more about them below:

Miguel recently joined the team this month as our new Clinical Services Coordinator. He will be communicating with students to ensure successful clinical rotations and supplying preceptors with



The Trifinio Clinic is located in San Marcos and the students get to experience living in housing that is walking distance from the clinic. Time at the clinic consists of an orientation, rotations in the pharmacy and laboratory, and participating in home visits with community nurses for well child checks. The Trifinio staff sends its gratitude for all the help and education patients and personnel receive when the CHA/PA students participate in clinic.

The PA students that participated in the Guatemala Rotation had the opportunity to share their experiences with the rest of their classmates and it generated a lot of excitement among the students so we are already looking forward to sending more students next summer.

On a fun ending note, three of our students had lunch at a restaurant in Quetzaltenango (where the students take Spanish classes) and the restaurant owner was a Colorado Avalanche fan so she had a great photo op with an Avalanche mannequin displayed by the tables. We look forward to sharing more about our Global rotations in coming newsletters.

everything they need to grant the best educational experience. Miguel grew up in Colorado and holds a B.A. in Psychology. He enjoys hikes, kayaking, trying new foods, and cat memes.

Danielle joined the CHA/PA team as Program Coordinator in mid-November. She will be managing the office, handling communications such as the newsletter and social media, and supporting CHA/PA events. Danielle is originally from Southern California, where she graduated from UCLA with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. After undergrad, she attended the University of Washington, where she earned a Masters degree in Health Administration. Danielle worked in healthcare in various roles in Seattle, Central California, and Indianapolis before moving to Denver with her family 8 years ago. She enjoys watching her kids participate in competitive sports, traveling, photography and just hanging out with friends.



CHA/PA News!

Emma Nicolli (Class of 2024) is on the board for the American Society of Endocrine PAs as a student representative and also serves on the social media committee.

Morgan Avery, Class of 2023 along



Recap of PA Week

What is PA week and why is it important? PA Week occurs every year in October, made to advocate and celebrate our soon-to-be profession, and its essential role in the field of medicine. This year we undertook many new events, including an outreach project at a local high school, our coat and sock drive, our advocacy panel, and (to add to the spirit of things) fun theme days!



A couple of highlights from PA week included a trip to Hinckley High School and the Casa DePaz Coat Drive. As part of a PAEA Project Access project, Program Director Jonathan Bowser accompanied 20 of our students to Hinckley High School just east of the Anschutz Medical Campus. They led an information session for high school students interested in the health professions. They used a “World Café” approach enabling Hinckley students to visit a number of stations for hands-on and informational sessions. There was so much interest that the Hinckley faculty had to cap the event at 55

with medical students Alyssa Cole '25 and Tyler Igoe '25, submitted a curriculum proposal as part of the Coalition on Physician Education’s (COPE) national addiction medicine curriculum challenge – and were selected as 1 of 4 winning submissions! This challenge is designed to foster engagement and collaboration among addiction medicine experts, medical school faculty (clerkship directors or the equivalent), and health professional students using cutting-edge concepts and training tools. Their winning proposal is entitled *“Integrating Training for Naloxone Administration and Buprenorphine Microdose Induction into the Medical Curriculum at CUSOM.”*



Faculty Present at 2022 PAEA Forum

In Fall 2022 faculty and staff were in San Diego for the PA Education Association (PAEA) Forum, our national conference. CHA/PA was well-represented at the meeting:

Kay Denler and Jackie Sivahop presented a day-long workshop: *Creating a Guiding Light: Building a Curriculum Map*. This workshop filled up months previously and was very well-received by those who were able to attend.

Jonathan Bowser presented a talk as a member of the PAEA President’s Commission: *Meeting the Accreditation Standard for Diversity*:

students. We were very impressed with the energy and focus of these high school students and so proud of our dedicated student-leaders. Moving forward, we will definitely be looking to strengthen our connection with Hinckley and other local area schools.

Students also hosted a Coat Drive for “Casa De Paz” (House of Peace). Casa De Paz offers peace in the midst of chaos and works to reunite families separated by ICE immigrant detention. We are proud to have made a large donation of new socks and gently used coats from CHA/PA.

– Chloe Boehlke '24 & Nicole Stewart '24, Bailie Zuber '25 & Evan Matheson '25



CHA/PA Alumni Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

The American Society for Transplantation and Cellular Therapy (ASTCT) has honored Brandon Nuechterlein, PA-C (Senior Instructor, Section of Hematology, Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplant) with their Advanced Practice Provider Special Interest Group 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award. The award is made in recognition of outstanding

Practical Examples for Institutional Leadership.

Kay Denler received the national PA Program Administrative Support Staff Award. The award recognizes “a program administrative staff member who has made extraordinary contributions to PA education.” Congrats, Kay!

CHA/PA faculty presented the following poster sessions:

- Jackie Sivahop and Kay Denler presented: Breaking Down Barriers: The Impact of Removing the GRE for Admissions
- Kristen Oase, Tanya Fernandez and Boyd Hammond presented: Medication Safety Training: Far Beyond Prescription Writing
- Kate LaPorta and Rebecca Maldonado presented: Can Clinical Reasoning Skills Be Enhanced by Curricular Design Change?
- Boyd Hammond and Tanya Fernandez presented: Implementation of a First-Generation Mentoring Program for PA students



work and dedication to APP practice in hematopoietic cell transplantation and cellular therapy. Nuechterlein was specifically recognized consistent with his high-quality contributions to the field through publications, presentations, mentorship, and leadership. He will receive his award at the ASTCT annual meeting in February in Orlando.



Health Services Collegiate Program Awardee – Manny Serrano

Emanuel “Manny” Serrano, 2nd year PA student, was selected for the Health Service Collegiate Program (HSCP) through the US Navy. The US Navy selects a few qualified individuals throughout the country who meet the criteria academically, physically, and mentally into their collegiate program where you swear in as a non-commissioned officer and receive benefits as if you are on active duty. In return, you commit an average 3–4 years where you will experience the life of a PA in the military and other responsibilities representing our great country.

Manny notes, "I chose the PA

Health Services Collegiate Program Awardee – Maria Michelotti

Maria Michelotti, second year PA student in the CHA/PA program was also selected for the Health Services Collegiate Program (HSCP). HSCP is a financial incentive program specific to the Navy. Its purpose is to recruit medical personnel to serve in the Medical Service Corps. While attending school, participants receive full active duty military pay and benefits including housing allowance. The time in the program counts toward military retirement and upon graduation, recipients attend Officer Candidate School where they receive their commission.

Maria explains, "I grew up in Montana where I worked as a medical assistant in a rural family medicine practice and later as a firefighter/EMT prior to moving to Colorado for PA school. I chose to pursue the PA profession because I love caring for and empowering patients to lead their healthiest lives. I also wanted to have the ability to work in a wide array of specialties. Even more, growing up in Montana I saw how PA's were changing the face of rural healthcare by increasing access to reliable care in small communities where the next closest providers were hours away. I am proud to be joining a profession that is such a vital part of the solutions to the hurdles we have in our healthcare system today."

"Receiving this scholarship has guaranteed me a placement in the Navy upon graduation. It has also opened the door to research for me

profession because of the versatility and the amount of patient-provider interaction you experience compared to other professions. I also like the way the CHA/PA education is formatted to understand the basic clinical foundations as well as emphasizing patient-provider medical decision making that promotes an effective provision of care to the patient."

"One of the benefits of receiving this scholarship for me is that a huge financial burden will be lifted such as salary pay, dental insurance, plan for retirement, and years counted for service that begin once I sign on. It's a huge blessing that was worth the near 2 years of applying, interviewing, and working on my own physical fitness to meet their standards. Being able to represent my family, community, friends, and classmates is a huge honor and one that motivates me in my education in the classroom and clinical setting on a regular basis. The HSCP scholarship is one of the highest honors that I have received, and I am blessed to have a high school dream of representing my country fulfilled by being a healthcare provider in the US military."

"My passion for military healthcare derives from listening and seeing the military impact in my dad's health after his sacrifice for his home country. It's a great sacrifice that is done daily, and the consequences not only impact their physical health but their social, emotional, mental, spiritual health as well. I strive to be a healthcare provider that is intentional

as I have joined the CU Anschutz Center for Combat Medicine and Battlefield Research as a COMBAT Scholar. As a PA, it can be difficult to get into research, but as a profession we have so much to offer in regard to improving patient care and medical systems. I hope to continue making research an important part of my career post graduation."

There were 20 selections for the HSCP scholarship in the US this year and the CHA/PA program received two of them - she and classmate Emmanuel Serrano - which is a true testament to the quality of education and outstanding reputation that the CHA/PA program has.



National Health Service Corps Scholarship Recipient

Class of 2024 student, Selena Ramirez Ahilon, was awarded the National Health Service Corps Scholarship. The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program (NHSC SP) scholarship aims to expand access to health care for underserved and underrepresented communities by providing financial assistance to students committed to serving these communities. As a NHSC scholar, Selena will have the opportunity to work in one of the many Health Profession shortage areas, in

and impactful in whatever circle I may be placed in whether it's on US soil, on the sea, or internationally. Please reach out if you have more questions and I would love to guide people interested in any way I can!"



University of Colorado
Anschutz Medical Campus
Child Health Associate/
Physician Assistant Program
School of Medicine

PA INFO SESSION

Save the Date for our Second PA Info Session of the Year

We are eager to hold our second information session of the year. The session will be held Friday, March 3, 2023 from 1–3pm via zoom. The registration form will soon be available on the [Information Sessions page](#) of the CU Physician Assistant website.

The goal of the information session is to provide information about the program, the PA profession, and the admissions process. Current students will be available for a Q&A session.

Please share this event with anyone who may be interested in learning about the CHA/PA program.

particular being able to practice primary care, a field that she knew from the beginning of her healthcare journey that she wanted to be a part of.

Read more regarding Selena's experience as a CHA/PA student and her thoughts on the scholarship:

"I am a very fortunate first-generation student aspiring to be a Physician Assistant (PA). I chose the PA profession because of the opportunity to be at the forefront of increasing access to health care for many patients. In addition, I really value the lateral mobility of the PA profession and the ability to explore a variety of different opportunities in the future. Finally, being a PA means the ability to be part of a life-long learning career, one dedicated to increasing and sharing healthcare knowledge in many communities."

"The scholarship has really motivated me to move forward with my plans to work in primary care without having to worry about the financial burdens of loans. I really value the impact that being a primary care provider signifies and this is something my scholarship highly values as well. I find it very impactful to be one of the first providers to introduce and welcome patients into healthcare and to be able to advocate for my patients along the way, as primary care is really centered on continuity of care."

"I just wanted to share that I feel very lucky to be a part of the CHA/PA program because of the great opportunities to work and learn from faculty that value primary care and practicing patient-centered care. I

also appreciate our curriculum and the opportunity to learn alongside amazing and caring classmates. I look forward to being a part of a very rewarding and impactful profession as a future PA."

– Selena Ramirez Ahilon, Class of 2024



Job Listings

Do you know that we have an active job listings page on our website? 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. You can find [job listings](#) on the Alumni webpage.



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!



Like & Follow us!

We would love to share information with you and to hear from you between our quarterly newsletter releases.

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and share our posts with other healthcare colleagues or those interested in pursuing roles in the healthcare field. We look forward to engaging with you there!

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