



T A P A
 TENNESSEE ACADEMY OF
 PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

PA Pulse

The heartbeat of TAPA

Bridging the Future of Healthcare

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From the President

As we get ready to close out 2023 and start 2024, it is commonplace to set new year's resolutions or goals and think about the future. While this is an important thing to do, I often fall into the trap of not reflecting back on all that has been accomplished in the past year.

It is easy to see the flaws or imperfections in ourselves and focus on the things we have yet to accomplish, like losing weight or taking more vacations. While it is always good to continue to set goals for ourselves, it is also just as important to review what goals you have achieved and feel proud of those accomplishments. When you climb a mountain it is easy to keep looking up at how much farther you have to go instead of remembering how far you have already climbed. This mentality can sometimes lead to a feeling of pessimism, especially if the goal you have set takes multiple tries to achieve.

When I reflect back on how much TAPA has accomplished in the past few years it speaks volumes for all the hard work, dedication, and countless hours that TAPA staff and Tennessee PAs put into the work to make it happen. When I meet PAs in this state and talk to them about our practice conditions compared with other states, the reply is always the same - people are pleasantly surprised with how much has been done in a short amount of time and how good of a situation we have compared to many other states, especially states where NPs have less restrictive practice parameters than PAs.

It is easy to take the parity that we have in Tennessee for granted, but all you have to do is look around the country and talk to PAs in states where this is an issue to know that if we don't keep fighting, we could be in the same situation. I thought it would be a good idea to remind us all of just how far we have come in the last five years or so, thanks to our hard work.

- In 2018, we passed legislation to change "supervision" to "collaboration" in regard to our legal licensing tie with physicians. This language matches what NPs have as well. That year, we also secured a seat at the table to discuss PAs and APRNs being granted authority to prescribe buprenorphine products for Opioid Use Disorder (OUD).
- In 2019, PAs were given authority to prescribe buprenorphine in certain settings.

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Mission - TAPA's mission is to promote accessible, quality healthcare, and to advance the education, profession and practice of physician assistants in Tennessee.

Vision

Protecting and empowering the practice of physician assistants in Tennessee.

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- In 2020, PAs were added to the law that allows medical providers to enter into “direct medical care agreements”, opening opportunities for PAs wishing to open clinics providing primary care services to patients for a set fee over a period of time – and eliminating the tie with insurance companies.
- In 2021, Tennessee was one of the first states to achieve an independent PA licensing board. In other states, PAs are licensed and regulated by the physician board which may have a PA or two as members, or a committee that functions under the physician board. This accomplishment fulfilled one of the three pillars of OTP listed by AAPA. Legislation was also passed to allow PAs to order home health services for their patients.
- In 2022, changes were made to the requirements for monthly physician visits, allowing those to be performed remotely for 10 of the 12 monthly visits each year.
- In 2023, we got farther with our OTP bill than we ever have – and farther than the nurses have ever gotten – with our bill being voted out of the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee on an 8-0 vote. Legislation was also passed that clarified that PAs working in solely telemedicine practices can have all 12 of the annual monthly visits conducted electronically, rather than at the practice site.

And during each of those legislative sessions, TAPA successfully lobbied against numerous bills that would have been harmful to the PA profession in our state.

Again, I want to point out that these accomplishments would not have been successful without our TAPA staff keeping an eye on all legislative efforts that affect PAs in Tennessee, and then PAs in our state fighting for our profession. While we have accomplished a lot in recent years, we have some big goals ahead of us as well.

We continue to push our OTP bill and each year we have more meetings with legislators, and we make more headway on it passing. We also are putting forth a bill to join the PA State Licensing Compact. This compact needs at least seven (7) states to adopt the legislation before it can officially exist. Hopefully Tennessee will be one of the original states that signs on to this legislation.

We have some amazing PA leaders in this state who continue to fight every year to help us achieve our goals, but there is much work to be done. There are many ways that you can be involved in helping achieve these goals. Not everyone is in a situation to be able to help with every aspect but hopefully you can identify a way to get involved because every little bit helps.

The easiest way to be involved is to be a member of TAPA and talk to other PAs that you know about joining. There is a lot of potential for growth with membership in our state and the benefits far outweigh the cost.

If you have more time, volunteering with TAPA is another great way to get involved. There is much work to be done and we could not accomplish what we do without our volunteers across the state.

Donating to the PAC fund is a great option especially if you don't have time to help volunteer. TAPA makes strategic decisions with the PAC donations, and this has paid off greatly in the past few years. We are much smaller in number than our physician and nursing colleagues, politically speaking, so we have to make good decisions with our funds. And the more funds we have, the more legislators we can make an impact with.

Also reach out to your local legislators. They really do care about what their constituents think, and they want to hear from you.

Last but not least, please attend PA Day on the Hill on Wednesday, Feb. 21 in Nashville. Last year we had meetings with more than 100 legislators in one day. It is a great experience to see so many practicing PAs and PA students from all over the state in one place.

I wish you and your family a wonderful and safe holiday season and happy new year. Please know how much I appreciate each and every one of you. I feel so blessed to work in such an amazing state in a profession that I love very dearly. Thank you for all of the hard work that you do every day caring for the patients in Tennessee.

Marie Patterson, PA-C, DHSc
TAPA President

TAPA presents awards at FallFest

By Katherine Pesut Moffat, TAPA Executive Director

On Monday, Oct. 2, FallFest conference attendees celebrated the hardwork and accomplishments of those individuals who go above and beyond each day to represent the PA profession and serve their colleagues. This year, the selection committee received a record number of nominations, so it was a difficult choice. The profession is blessed to have so many wonderful people caring for patients, so congratulations to those recognized this year.

PA of the Year – Shane Apperley

This year's TAPA PA of the Year is Shane Apperley. For years, Shane has volunteered tirelessly behind the scenes at TAPA conferences and has been an unsung hero of the Academy.

A native of the United Kingdom, Shane was recruited to Lincoln Memorial University-Harrogate by the late TAPA President Rex Hobbs in 2015. He served as an associate professor and later, the associate program director, from 2015-2023. While at LMU, he also served as the president and chair of the Faculty Senate.

Shane has been an active volunteer of TAPA from the minute he came to Tennessee. He has served on the CME Committee and was the chair from 2019-2022, and he has given numerous lectures at TAPA conferences – often coming through in a pinch when a speaker has to cancel at the last minute.

Most recently, Shane served as TAPA's Treasurer from 2021-2023. He has also been a regular attendee of TAPA's PA Day on the Hill, bringing students with him and mentoring them through meetings with legislators.

Outside of the Academy, Shane is an active volunteer in his community. He has served as a board member and a member of the Advisory Panel for Servolution Health Services, a rural clinic providing comprehensive healthcare for the uninsured. Shane also served as the clinical lead for LMU's medical mission trip to Peru in 2018. TAPA is pleased to recognize him for all of his hard work done on behalf of TAPA, his students, and his PA colleagues.

PA Student of the Year – Cristian Reinosa

This year's PA Student of the Year is Cristian Reinosa. Cristian graduated this year from LMU-Harrogate's PA Program. While there, he was a student ambassador, participating in meet and greets and Zoom sessions with the incoming class.

Cristian was elected the first ever student to be president of the Physician Associates for Latino Health (PALH), a constituent organization of the AAPA.

He volunteers with programs in his community, including First Love on Main as a bilingual translator, and as a VBS volunteer at Calvary Baptist Church.

Cristian also appreciates the need for advocacy within our profession and attended TAPA's Day on the Hill and joined TAPA leaders Brendan Lucas and Kristin Engelhaupt at the AAPA's Legislative Advocacy Summit in October in Washington, DC. It is a pleasure to recognize Christian for his involvement within the PA community!

Preceptor of the Year – Michael Mabry

This year's Preceptor of the Year is Dr. Michael Mabry. Dr. Mabry currently serves as a preceptor with Milligan University. He has long supported the PA profession through his work with Milligan

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SAVE THE DATES!

We hope to see you at a TAPA conference in 2024. Below are the dates and locations of upcoming CME conferences.

Spring Fling

April 5-6, 2024

The Chattanooga Hotel
Chattanooga, Tenn.

FallFest

Oct. 7-11, 2024

Gatlinburg Convention Center
Gatlinburg, Tenn.

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University. He has served as a member of Milligan's PA Program Advisory Committee, is adjunct faculty and preceptor for Milligan, and was the keynote speaker for Milligan University's PA Program White Coat Ceremony.

Dr. Mabry is the founder of Hope to Walk, a non-profit organization that develops low-cost prosthetic limbs for impoverished amputee patients in developing countries. He also served as the director of One7 ministries in Johnson City, planning fundraisers and educating community leaders regarding low-income population needs.

Dr. Mabry has received many accolades for the work he has done, including Distinguished Non-Profit Leader of the Year in Blacksburg, Virginia; Milligan University's Preceptor of the Year; and the 2016 Excellence in Public Health Award from the US Public Health Service.

Educator of the Year – Diana Pruitt and Shane Smith

For the first time ever, the committee had a tie when scoring the nominations. And because both recipients are outstanding individuals, the committee opted to honor them both this year.

Diana Pruitt is on faculty with South College in Knoxville and practices emergency medicine with TeamHealth. Each of her students wrote a nomination form, so you can tell she is beloved by her students. They said things like;

"She consistently goes above and beyond for her students", adding that "Her approachable, amicable and positive spirit is radically contagious, and it is evident that she wants every one of us to succeed both in our schooling and our future endeavors as PAs".

The passion she puts into teaching her students, and the admiration they have for her, is the legacy every PA educator strives to achieve. TAPA is pleased to honor Diana for going above and beyond for her students!



Diana Pruitt receives the Educator of the Year award.



Shane Smith receives the Educator of the Year award.

The second recipient is Shane Smith who is on faculty at Milligan University and also serves as the admissions coordinator. Shane works in emergency medicine and trauma surgery and has a passion for sharing his knowledge with students.

Shane has spent countless hours behind the scenes as TAPA's CME Chair, working to make sure that this conference goes smoothly for PA and students, particularly the student workshops.

As TAPA's Tricities Director, he has worked to energize the region and model advocacy for his students. This includes bringing students to TAPA's PA Day on the Hill to show them firsthand why they need to be involved in shaping the future of the profession. It is a pleasure to recognize Shane for his dedication to his students!

Congratulations to everyone who was recognized this year!

TAPA Hall of Fame

TAPA's Hall of Fame recognizes PAs based upon the following standards: active membership in TAPA; demonstration of a lifelong commitment to TAPA; significant contributions to TAPA; notable TAPA accomplishments; significant time working for TAPA development; serving in leadership positions; distinction in medical practice, medical education, research, or healthcare management; and community service. The two individuals inducted into the Hall of Fame at FallFest most certainly reflect these qualities and accomplishments.

Greg Cain is a PA entrepreneur who started his own clinic in 2011, focusing on internal medicine and occupational health. He opened his practice with two employees and increased his clinic to six

Hall of Fame, continued from page 4

full-time healthcare providers, 20 ancillary staff, two x-ray techs and one ultrasound tech at five locations. His practice also provides occupational health services for more than 150 large local manufacturing and construction companies. Not only does he provide critical medical care in rural and underserved areas, but he has also created dozens of good paying, professional jobs in his community.



Don Black welcomes Greg Cain into the TAPA Hall of Fame.

He is currently serving as TAPA's immediate past president on the Board of Directors, after previously holding the positions of president and treasurer. During his tenure as president, he spent dozens of hours each week advocating for PAs, meeting with legislators, and traveling to Nashville to promote the profession. His dedication to the Academy was tireless.

Greg is an active member of his community, coaching the Englewood Little League Football. He also sponsored an annual dove hunt which typically raised about \$40,000 a year for Children's Hospital of East Tennessee. Greg is one of those PAs who will get done what needs to be done for the profession and his community.

The next inductee is Michael "Trent" Scates. Trent has long been an active member of TAPA, which was evidenced by his selection as TAPA's PA of the Year 2016.

Trent has served on faculty at Bethel University's PA program, and he has been the program director since 2018. In his role at Bethel, he has

demonstrated to his students the importance of being involved with and supporting the state Academy through membership and attendance at conferences.

As a soldier, he has completed the Engineer Basic Officer Leadership Course, Ordinance Officer Advanced Course, Intermediate level Education Course, and graduated Army War College with a master's degree in strategic studies from US Army War College.

He has earned many medals, including the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terror Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Gold Hourglass and M Device, Overseas Service Medal with Numeral 3, Army Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon with Numeral 4.

Trent is currently serving in the Tennessee Army National Guard as the Assistant Adjutant General for the State of Tennessee – the highest ranking of any PA in the state. He has excelled at balancing his career as a PA while serving his country honorably for 33 years and through multiple deployments.

Per his nomination form, Trent is a great example of humility who has a strong sense of duty to both this country and his patients. His career path is an example of the mobility our profession can afford a person.

His commitment to students in the later part of his career is deeply rooted in that sense of duty as he strives to pass the baton to the next generation.

His leadership in the profession as a program director reflects this commitment as he continues to improve the professional lives of faculty and staff and the education of students. Trent is an exemplary role model for his students and fellow PAs.



Don Black congratulates Trent Scates on being inducted into the TAPA Hall of Fame.

Tennessee PA Foundation Report

By Frank Warren, Secretary/Treasurer, Tennessee PA Foundation

We would like to recognize the scholarship recipients of 2023 for those who were not able to attend TAPA's 47th annual Fallfest CME Conference in October, held once again in the beautiful setting of the Smoky Mountains in Gatlinburg. We are proud to say that our recipients represent at least six different Tennessee PA programs.

All of our recipients sent in exceptional applications describing their past achievements, volunteerism, current and past academic accomplishments, an essay on their reasons for choosing to become PA, their future aspirations and goals, and their financial needs as part of the application process. BRAVO to the future of our profession!

This year, the Foundation was able to award \$7,500 in scholarships to help make a difference in these students and their families' lives. THANK YOU to all of our donors who have made this work possible!!

The JC Carey Memorial Scholarship winners were Madison Dolly, Trevecca Nazarene University (\$500); Benjamin Ezell, Middle Tennessee State University (\$500); John Tester, Milligan University (\$500); Mary Gwindolyn Allen, Christian Brothers University (\$1,000); Karsyn Suhadolink, South College-Knoxville (\$1,000); and Nathan Zuck, Lincoln Memorial University-Harrogate (\$1,000).

The James Montag, Jr Military Service Scholarship, which is funded yearly by Jim Montag for a PA student in a Tennessee PA program with a history of military service, was awarded to Andrew Lawrence, South College-Knoxville (\$1,000).



Frank Warren presents Foundation scholarships at FallFest.

This was the first year for the Presley PA Mom Scholarship which Johnny Presley has graciously funded in honor of his mother who has taken care of many PA students in her home through the years. There were two Presley Scholarships given - the first to Blaire Terrell, Lincoln Memorial University-Harrogate (\$1,000) and the second to Benjamin Ezell, Middle Tennessee State University (\$1,000).



Blaire Terrell receives the inaugural Presley scholarship.

We did have several more qualified applications and the TAPA Board of Directors once again had to make difficult decisions for distribution of our available funds. Every year we give out what has been entrusted to the Foundation and start raising funds again for the following year.

We hope you will consider a tax donation as a one-time gift or set up recurring monthly payments using the online form. Checks can be mailed to the TN PA Foundation in c/o TAPA PO Box 150785, Nashville, TN 37215. Because the Foundation is 501(c)3 IRS charitable organization, most donations are tax deductible.

Thanks again to all of our Foundation supporters and have a blessed and healthy 2024. We hope to see you at Spring Fling in Chattanooga and Fallfest in Gatlinburg in 2024.



Congratulations to South College-Nashville, TAPA's 2023 Challenge Bowl Champs! Jessica Rallo, Samantha Ross, Rachel Edgil, and Isabella Guzman.

2023 TAPA PAC Contributors

(Received Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2023)

Thank you to the many PAs who donated to TAPA's PAC this year. If you haven't yet contributed to the PAC this year, please visit www.tnpa.com/political-action-committee to make your online contribution, or mail checks to TAPA PAC, PO Box 150785, Nashville, TN 37215.

Bridge Members contributing \$250+

*Donald Black
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Spring Fling 2024

April 5-6

The Chattanooga Hotel



Make plans to attend a TAPA conference in 2024!

TAPA is excited to return to Chattanooga for what will be TAPA's final Spring Fling conference. Make plans to join colleagues on Friday, April 5 and Saturday, April 6 for two days of medical education, networking and PA fellowship.

Chattanooga is an amazing city to visit. The restaurant scene is outstanding, and outdoor enthusiasts will find many recreational options. If you want to bring your family for a weekend getaway, there are many family-friendly attractions to choose from, such as the Tennessee Aquarium, Rock City, Ruby Falls, the Lookout Mountain Incline Railway and the Chattanooga Zoo.

If you can't come to Spring Fling, join colleagues at FallFest in Gatlinburg. This is TAPA's largest conference offering networking opportunities, quality medical education, and fellowship with colleagues.

Gatlinburg is always a favorite place to be in the fall. Enjoy the beautiful fall colors, plan a hike in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, or enjoy one of the many attractions in the area.

For more conference information, including registration forms, visit TAPA's website at www.tnpa.com. We hope to see you in 2024!

FallFest 2024

Oct. 7-11

Gatlinburg Convention Center

