



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

This is my last column as TAPA president, and the past two years have flown by. I appreciate the support that I've received from TAPA members, fellow practice owners, and staff.

Since the day I took office, I have been singularly focused on improving PA practice in our state. In 2021, we introduced legislation to implement the AAPA's Optimal Team Practice (OTP) model in Tennessee. Our bill did two things – it established an independent Board of PAs and it removed the tether between a PA's license and a physician's license. While we didn't get everything we asked for, we did establish an independent Board of PAs. I'm proud that Tennessee joined the small number of states where PAs are regulated by a PA-majority board.

In 2022, we again introduced legislation to implement OTP. Senate committee members halted our bill and the nurses' bill and promised to put together a task force that would produce a bill addressing independent practice in 2023. While the task force was created and had several meetings, no bill was produced for this session.

Throughout 2022, TAPA staff continued to meet with the physician groups to develop a bill. In the absence of a task force bill this session, TAPA introduced our own OTP bill. We made progress with our bill, passing it out of the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee on an 8-0 vote. However, just before our bill was to be considered in the Senate Health and Welfare Committee, Lt. Gov. Randy McNally voiced opposition to our bill to our Senate sponsor. Instead of letting the bill "die" this year, TAPA opted to "pause" the bill until the 2024 session. This means that we can pick up where we left off in January 2024 instead of having to start over from scratch.

PAs who have been attending TAPA's Day on the Hill over the years will tell you that attitudes towards PAs have changed dramatically. The interactions that PAs and students have had with legislators has educated them about how PAs are educated and how PAs practice, and this has resulted in support for PAs and reforms to our regulation and oversight. Momentum is building. This is not the time to give up or sit on the sidelines.

While I will pass the leadership reins to a new president this summer, I will remain active in TAPA's legislative efforts. However, we need more PAs to

See President, page 2

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.

President, continued from page 1

step up and join us in our advocacy. If you aren't sure how to get started, call our Executive Director Katherine Moffat. She can connect you with your legislators and coach you on how to interact with them.

Serving as your president has truly been an honor.

Partner with TAPA for Your CME Needs

By Mallory Briggs, TAPA Special Event and Conference Coordinator

TAPA is pleased to offer many quality CME opportunities, and we hope you will look to the Academy as your CME provider. Join us at either Spring Fling or FallFest each year and easily earn the CME you need to renew your Tennessee license and NCCPA certification. While there are many avenues for earning CME – through employers, online, etc. – there are benefits to earning your CME by attending local conferences.

Expertise – Attending a live lecture gives attendees access to expertise that doesn't always exist online. At an in-person event, attendees can gain clarity on a topic by asking questions of the presenter at the end of a lecture and even spend a few minutes in direct consultation with the speaker about their specific questions or circumstances. Having direct access to experts is priceless.

Networking – Attending a TAPA conference gives PAs the opportunity to meet other PAs who are working in the same specialty or practicing in their community. PAs do not practice in silos, and knowing which PAs have expertise in different areas builds your network of resources.

Latest Trends – In addition to medical lectures, TAPA's conferences include an Exhibit Hall which spotlights the latest trends in medicine. Visiting with representatives allows PAs to learn about the latest innovations in medicine to better care for their patients.

Job Opportunities – In medicine, job openings are often "word of mouth". PAs that are not engaged with their colleagues won't know about these positions. Over the years, there have been

many PAs who have ended up getting hired after networking at a conference with a PA whose practice is hiring.

Leadership and Advocacy – At each TAPA conference, attendees have the opportunity to attend a TAPA Board of Directors meeting and network with TAPA leaders.

At FallFest, the Legislative Luncheon gives attendees the chance to hear from TAPA's lobbyists on the Academy's advocacy efforts. In these settings, members can learn how they can plug into the organization, get involved, and help shape the future of the profession.

Fellowship – Getting to know colleagues from across the state helps to strengthen the profession and allows PAs to feel a part of something bigger than just themselves or their practice. PAs can also plan "mini reunions" by attending conferences with friends from PA school, earning CME while catching up with old friends!

Financial Support – Proceeds from TAPA's conferences make up a significant portion of TAPA's operating budget. These funds allow TAPA to hire support staff who can look out for the interests of PAs, plan professional development programming, and be resources to members.

Have Fun and Travel – Attending conferences allows you to escape the routines of everyday practice and focus on increasing your clinical knowledge, all while surrounding yourself with like-minded colleagues.

With the reductions that PAs are seeing in their CME allowances from employers, TAPA strives to provide an affordable conference experience that includes things such as breakfast and luncheons to stretch your CME dollar. We hope to see you at a TAPA conference soon!

SAVE THE DATES!

FallFest

Oct. 2-6, 2023

Gatlinburg Convention Center

Spring Fling

April 5-6, 2024

The Chattanooga Hotel

PA Day on the Hill Recap

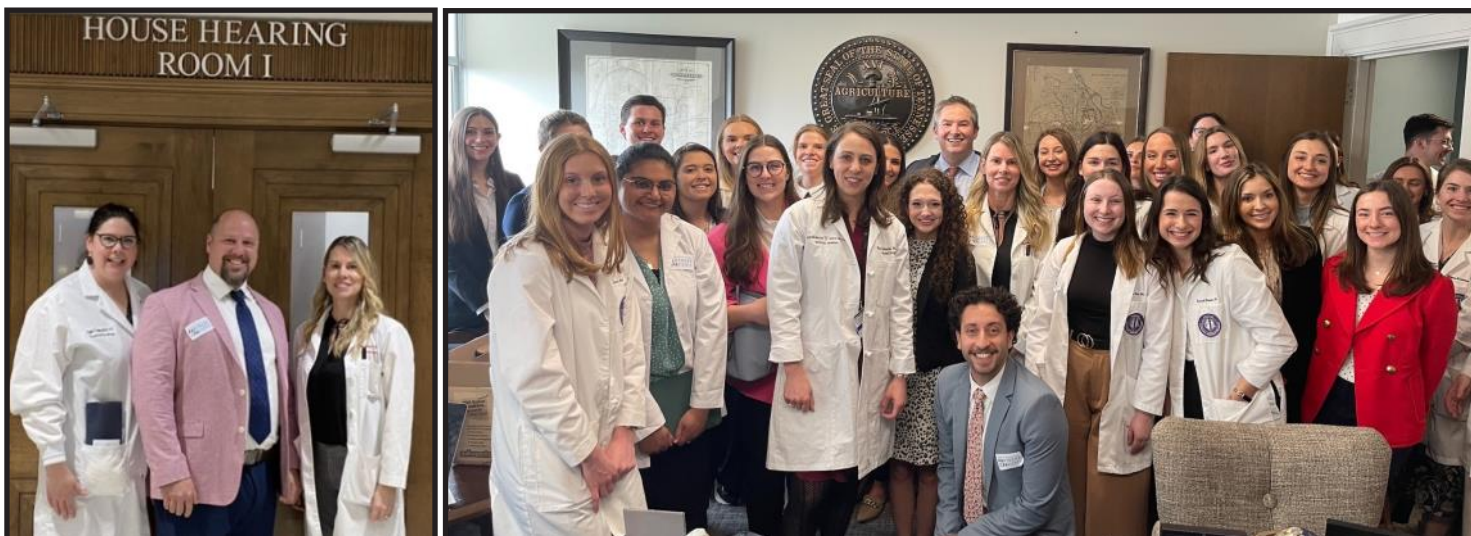
By Katherine Pesut Moffat, TAPA Executive Director

This year’s PA Day on the Hill was a great success! On Wednesday, Feb. 22, nearly 300 PAs and students came to Nashville to meet with legislators and advocate for optimal team practice (OTP). Attendance set another record as it was the largest crowd participating thus far, and attendees really made an impact on legislators!

The day began with a legislative briefing where PAs and students learned about TAPA’s optimal team practice (OTP) bill as well as other bills pending in the Legislature that could affect PA practice in Tennessee. Following the briefing, the group traveled to the legislative offices in the Cordell Hull Building for their appointments with legislators.

Throughout the day, PAs and students met with more than 100 different legislators. They raised awareness of the PA profession and educated legislators about PA training and the need to modernize Tennessee’s PA Practice Act.

TAPA appreciates everyone who participated in this year’s Day on the Hill. If you weren’t able to join us this year, we hope to see you in 2024.



Spring Fling Sponsors and Exhibitors

TAPA would like to thank its sponsors and exhibitors of Spring Fling 2023. Their support helped TAPA put on an outstanding conference.

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2023 TAPA PAC Contributors

(Received Jan. 1-March 31, 2023)

Thank you to the many PAs who donated to TAPA's PAC this year. Your contributions are investments in the future of your profession!

Bridge Members

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Sadril Mohammad

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- *James Montag, Jr.

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contributing up to \$100

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- *Sarah Murawski
- *Johnny Nowlin
- *Leigh Anne Pickup
- Lauren Poslaiko
- Vincent Proctor
- *Jodi Robbe
- Angelina Sheridan
- Carol Taylor

TAPA Awards

TAPA is accepting nominations for the following awards:

- **PA of the Year**
- **PA Student of the Year**
- **Preceptor of the Year**
- **Educator of the Year**

Nominations can be submitted by PAs, PA students, faculty and collaborating physicians. The nomination deadline is **July 31, 2023**. Nomination forms can be downloaded from the TAPA website at www.tnnpa.com. Awards will be presented at FallFest.