



T A P A
 TENNESSEE ACADEMY OF
 PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

PA Pulse

The heartbeat of TAPA

Bridging the Future of Healthcare

Official publication of the Tennessee Academy of Physician Assistants

Vol. 27, No. 3, September 2021

In this issue

From the President1

Get ready for FallFest!.....3

FallFest Sponsors and Exhibitors4

Tennessee’s Board of PAs gets to work.....4

American Lung Association - Reaching Rural Providers Initiative6

Sign up for monthly contributions to TAPA PAC.....7

2021 PAC Contributors.....8

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.

From the President

On Sept. 21, I had the pleasure of hosting Gov. Bill Lee at my rural clinic. He knew very little about PAs, so I and TAPA’s Executive Director Katherine Moffat spent about 30 minutes talking to him about PA training, scope of practice, and current rules and regulations that hamper the ability of PAs to provide patient care at the top of our training. Gov. Lee was very interested in what we had to say, and he asked a lot of questions about PAs.

This meeting was possible because I have spent many years getting to know my state legislators and building relationships with them. And you know what? It’s so easy! The thing I’ve noticed about politicians is that they are talkers. They get into these positions because they like to talk to people and they like to help people solve problems.

There is no magic to getting to know your legislator. For me, I just picked up the phone one day and called my state senator about a reimbursement problem I was having and had been working with TAPA to fix. Over time, we became friends and now he picks up the phone to ask me questions about healthcare bills and health policy. He is not a provider, so many of the issues being brought to him are outside of his expertise – so now I have become a resource to him.

This quarter, I would like to challenge each and every one of you to reach out to your legislators. All too often, we talk to these leaders, like Gov. Lee, and find out that unless they have received care from a PA, they aren’t familiar with our training or scope of practice. And even if they are, they may have misinformation about our profession. We need to all work together to educate, inform, and advocate.

I ask you today to go to www.capitol.tn.gov, click on “Find My Legislator” in the top right corner of the page, and enter your home address to find your House and Senate members. Click on their profile, get their email, and send them an email. It can be as simple as saying:

Hello! I am a constituent of yours and would like to meet with you to talk about my work as a PA in our community. Do you have any events coming up, or perhaps we can meet for coffee?

When they respond, and they usually will, call Katherine at the TAPA office and she or TAPA’s Lobbyist Alexandria Honeycutt will walk you through

See President, page 3

LMU

School of Medical Sciences LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY



Doctor of Medical Science Program

Unparalleled comprehensive medical education
designed with the working PA in mind



Engage in 45 hours
of hands-on
ultrasound training
by an experienced,
board-certified
radiologist



Enhance your medical
knowledge with our
curriculum taught
entirely by seasoned,
board-certified
physicians



Drive evidence-based
medicine through
your research and
publication

100%
of supervising physicians
reported advancement in
DMS graduates' medical
knowledge

Choose the cognate that suits you:

- Emergency Medicine
- Primary Care
- Internal Medicine
- Medical Education

sms.LMUnet.edu

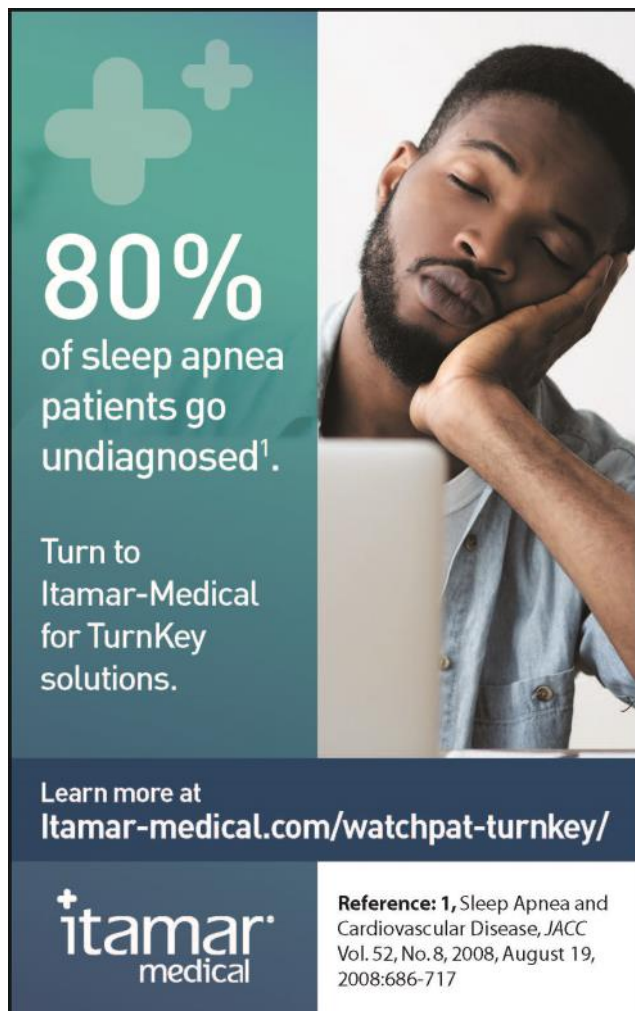
President, continued from page 1

what to say. And depending on their schedule, they may be able to join you for the meeting.

Another way to connect with your legislators is to attend an event. Legislators are always hosting fundraising events this time of year, so ask to be added to their mailing list and make an effort to attend at least one event before the end of the year. You might need to shell out some money to attend, but isn't that investment in the future of your career worth it?

It is time for each one of us to take responsibility for our profession and stop waiting for someone else to step up and advocate for us. If we want to see change happen in our state, each of us must put in the work of building relationships with those who hold the future of our profession in their hands.

Greg Cain, PA-C
TAPA President



80%
of sleep apnea
patients go
undiagnosed¹.

Turn to
Itamar-Medical
for TurnKey
solutions.

Learn more at
itamar-medical.com/watchpat-turnkey/

itamar
medical

Reference: 1, Sleep Apnea and
Cardiovascular Disease, *JACC*
Vol. 52, No. 8, 2008, August 19,
2008:686-717



Get ready for FallFest!

By Mallory Briggs, TAPA Special Event and Conference Coordinator

For those who have registered for FallFest, we are looking forward to seeing you in Gatlinburg. If you haven't yet registered, it's not too late! TAPA is currently accepting onsite registrations – for both in-person attendance and virtual.

TAPA looks forward to our Gatlinburg visit each year. It is always nice to reconnect with conference attendees, especially during these trying times. And fall is the perfect time to visit Gatlinburg and the Smoky Mountains.

During your free time, take in the sights and enjoy the boundless experiences to choose from. If you aren't afraid of heights, soar to the top of Anakeesta Mountain on a one-of-a-kind Chondola or walk across the longest pedestrian Skybridge in North America. Ride the aerial tram to Ober Gatlinburg and enjoy their Oktoberfest celebration, which includes German cuisine and an outdoor Bier Garten.

The Great Smoky Mountains are just down the street from the convention center, and it is the most visited national park in the country. Visitors will find more than 800 miles of hiking trails in the park, white water rafting, biking and horseback riding. You can choose from short hikes that are less than a mile, but will still recharge your batteries, or longer and more strenuous hikes that will reward you with a beautiful waterfall at the end. Stop by the Registration Desk if you need suggestions!

We hope you are also saving the date for TAPA's Spring Fling 2022. The conference will be returning to Nashville next year and will be held April 8-9 at the Airport Hilton.

Stay tuned and check TAPA's website, www.tnpa.com, for more details!

FallFest Sponsors and Exhibitors

TAPA would like to thank the following companies for supporting our fall conference. The content they provide enhances attendees' clinical knowledge and professional development, and their financial support helps keep registration rates low. Please take the time to thank their reps either at the conference or when they call on your practice.

Gold Sponsors

- Biohaven Pharmaceuticals
- Lincoln Memorial University, School of Medical Sciences

Silver Sponsor

- AbbVie/Allergan

Bronze Sponsors

- Dispatch Health
- Esperion
- Itamar Medical
- Novo Nordisk
- Tennessee Medical Foundation

Exhibitors

- Alexion
- Amarin Pharma, Inc.
- AstraZeneca
- AstraZeneca Long Term Care-Renal
- Bayer
- EMK Medical Services
- Genentech
- Inspire Medical Systems, Inc.
- Kentucky Army National Guard
- Middle Tennessee State University PA Program
- Novo Nordisk
- PathGroup
- Tennessee Army National Guard

SAVE THE DATE!

Spring Fling
April 8-9, 2022
Hilton Nashville Airport
Nashville, Tenn.

Tennessee's Board of PAs gets to work

By Katherine Pesut Moffat, TAPA Executive Director

The newly constituted Board of PAs had their first meeting on Friday, Aug. 13. This was a momentous occasion that would not have been possible without the hard work and support of PAs and students across the state.

Last spring, you answered the call and contacted legislators to ask them to vote in favor of the bill that created the new Board, and your efforts paid off. TAPA's bill passed in the Senate on a vote of 33-0 and in the House on a vote of 91-0. It was an overwhelming victory!

The legislation moved the Committee on Physician Assistants (COPA) out from under the Board of Medical Examiners and created an independent Board of PAs. The new Board is comprised of seven PAs (five of which moved to the new Board from COPA), one physician member, and one consumer member.

See Board, page 6

Struggling?



IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS DEALING WITH...

- Stress/Burnout
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Substance Use
- Anger
- Impulsive Behavior
- Relationship Issues
- Conflicts at Work

We are here to help.

Don't wait until an issue is career or life threatening. Call the TMF Physician's Health Program. We are your confidential resource for help, hope, and healing.

615-467-6411



Saving Lives. Saving Careers.

5141 Virginia Way, Ste. 110
 Brentwood, TN 37027

e-tmf.org

TAKE THE LEAD IN HEALTH CARE

Apply for MTSU's new Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program.

If approved by ARC-PA, our 27-month program will prepare physician assistants for careers in:

- primary care
- internal medicine
- pediatrics
- surgery
- emergency medicine
- women's health
- mental health
- and other medical/
surgical specialties

First cohort planned
for May 2022

If approved by ARC-PA,
our program will offer
in-state students the lowest
PA tuition in Tennessee.



No. 1 Job in 2021:
Physician Assistant
U.S. News & World Report

Call **615-494-7790** or email PA.Program@mtsu.edu

Middle Tennessee State University has applied for Accreditation-Provisional from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). Middle Tennessee State University anticipates matriculating its first class in May 2022, pending achieving Accreditation-Provisional status at the September 2021 ARC-PA meeting.

Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding accreditation-provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students.

In the event that MTSU does not receive Accreditation-Provisional status, the PA program will not commence and any students offered seats for the inaugural class will have all fees and deposits returned.

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY.

I AM *true* **BLUE**.

mtsu.edu/pa



0821-9876 / Middle Tennessee State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. See our full policy at mtsu.edu/lec.

Board, continued from page 4

TAPA received many applications from PAs to fill the two new seats, and several TAPA members helped recruit physicians to apply for that seat. Applications have been sent to the governor's office, and we are hoping to have those appointments in place soon.

Tennessee is one of the few states in the country that has a PA-majority, independent regulatory board governing the PA profession. This is a really big deal that should make Tennessee PAs proud! The creation of our own board takes us one step closer to implementing Optimal Team Practice (OTP) in our state.

While we enjoyed legislative success this year, our work is not done. PAs continue to practice under collaboration rules that were put in place in 1999. The way that medicine is practiced has changed drastically over the last two decades, but the regulations governing your practice have not.

We must continue our quest to modernize PA rules and regulations so that PAs can practice at the top of their training, and get rid of onerous regulations that hamper the efforts of PAs to practice in rural and underserved areas. PAs are not looking to replace physicians, but we must reinvent the team-based model to reflect the realities of how medicine is practiced on a daily basis in our state.

The General Assembly will reconvene in January 2022, and we hope you are planning to attend our Day on the Hill on Feb. 23, 2022. We will need all hands on deck to educate, inform, and advocate for PAs.

UBRELVY[®]
(ubrogepant) tablets

UBR129944 09/20

American Lung Association - Reaching Rural Providers Initiative

The American Lung Association's Reaching Rural Providers Initiative aims to increase early diagnoses of COPD in rural communities by providing healthcare providers like physician assistants, respiratory therapists, and nurse practitioners, with educational materials, professional trainings, and patient-focused printable handouts and videos. Resources are available nationwide, but additional focus will be on rural communities in six states with the highest prevalence estimates for COPD diagnosis, hospitalizations and death. These states include Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia and Indiana.

Reaching Rural Providers Initiative includes:

- **Information from trusted resources**—Provider courses and patient-focused printable handouts from organizations like the *American Lung Association* and *NHLBI: Learn More Breathe Better*.
- **Printed patient-focused materials**—by completing the online form, you can receive printed, patient-focused handouts such as the *COPD Action and Management Plan*, *Living with Lung Disease* and the *Benefits of Quitting, COPD & Vaccines: What you Need to Know* and more!
- **Free Continuing Education Credits**—Access our free healthcare provider education and take the *COPD Overview* course or *Ask, Advise, Refer to Quit, Don't Switch* training.

The American Lung Association is a trusted, nationwide resource for healthcare providers and lung health education. COPD is the third leading cause of disease-related death and a leading cause of disability in the United States. Early diagnosis is key to improving patient outcomes in disease management. In rural communities, COPD is nearly twice as common as urban areas.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, COPD, is an umbrella term for chronic bronchitis and

See COPD, page 7

COPD, continued from page 6

emphysema. Many people don't recognize the symptoms of COPD until later stages of the disease. Shortness of breath is an important symptom of lung disease. Some people think they are short of breath or less able to go about their normal activities because they are "just getting older."

There is no cure, but COPD can be treated, and the earlier a patient is diagnosed the sooner the treatment can begin. Tobacco use is the leading cause of COPD. While there has been great progress in reducing overall tobacco use over the past several decades, some parts of our society bear a disproportionate burden of tobacco use and tobacco related illness. America's rural population is one group more heavily impacted by tobacco use. People living in rural communities are more likely to use tobacco, more likely to be exposed to secondhand smoke, and less likely to have access to programs that help them quit smoking.

Learn more at Lung.org/rural.



ESPERION IS A PROUD SPONSOR OF
**THE 2021
TAPA 45th ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

Thank you to all the dedicated
physician assistants.

To learn more about ESPERION and its products,
NEXLIZET and NEXLETOL, visit NEXLIZETHCP.com

ESPERION

NEXLIZET
(Ibuprofen acid
and esfenivale) tablets

NEXLETOL
(benzopidol acid) tablets

All trademarks and trade names are the property of their respective owners.
© 2021 ESPERION Therapeutics, Inc. All rights reserved. 09/21 US-NXTL-2100300

Sign up for monthly contributions to TAPA PAC

TAPA's Political Action Committee (PAC) is an important tool in our legislative tool box. The fact is, running a successful campaign is expensive. Successful candidates typically spent a lot of money on advertising and outreach to get their message to voters.

There are groups in Tennessee that would like to preserve the status quo because the current regulatory environment benefits them. They see the modernization of PA practice as a threat to their existence, and you'd better believe they are contributing to legislative candidates that will oppose any bill that promotes the interests of PAs.

To combat that, PAs must support those candidates that support PAs. Not every PA is in the position to write a large check to a candidate. The PAC allows us to bundle smaller contributions into one large campaign donation that gets the attention of the candidates that support us.

TAPA has set up a monthly or quarterly payment system to help us achieve our fundraising goals. If you can't write one big check, won't you consider making smaller monthly contributions that will add up to significantly support the PAC?

Just \$25 a month adds up to \$300 over the course of a year, \$50 a month adds up to \$600 a year, and \$100 a month adds up to \$1200. The ability to keep your job and practice to the fullest extent of your training is certainly worth a small, monthly investment.

Simply [click here](#) to sign up for the automatic contributions on your credit card and join your colleagues listed on the next page with an asterisk by their name signifying that they are regular contributors to TAPA PAC.



Be sure to "like" TAPA's Facebook page to keep up to date on Academy news.

Also, each TAPA region has a Facebook group. Join your region's group to find out about dinner meetings, job opportunities, and other networking events.

2021 PAC Contributors

As of 9/30/2021

Bridge Members

contributing \$250+

*Greg Cain
John Davis
*Richard Heintz
*David Lennon
*Sadril Mohammad
*Jim Montag
*Johnny Nowlin
*David Roberts
*Michelle Ross
Desirae Sheppard
Mark Smith

Sustaining member

contributing \$100-\$249

*Donald Black
Rebecca Dodd
Patrecia Eaton
Timothy Jenkins
Allison Jowers
Courtney Ledbetter
Marci Levy
*Joseph Lindahl

Sarah McQueen
Casey Messer
Andrew Morgan
Joshua Porter
*Melissa Watson
Joseph Willmitch

Contributing member

contributing up to \$100

Jill Absher
Amy Bonk-Chanin
Caryl Brower
Jarrett Brown
Megan Burrows
Brian Buxton
Nicole Campbell
Kaycie Cartwright
Megan Chapman
Alecia Colvin
Samuel Cook
Rayma Coslett
Matthew Finn
Kelly Foutch
Sioli Fuimaono

Anna Herring
Karen Isopi
Jeff Jarnagin
William Johnson
Ronda Kopra
Michael Maddox
Jennifer Mayer
Lea Meine
Ashley Messick-Hite
David Mittman
Jena Morcelle
Sarah Murawski
Ka Chun Ng
Melissa Noel
Brent Oland
Andrea Perkins
Elizabeth Perkins Hayes
Leigh Anne Pickup
Teresa Pisani
Vincent Proctor
Alexia Proulx
Kimberly Quiring
Cary Register
Laurie Ryznyk

Anastasiya Sasloff
Miggy Scott
Vicki Stiltner
Wendy Sumner Alexander
Carol Taylor
Robert Tomsett
Sarah Vensel
Frank Warren
Desmond Watt
Chloe Wilson
Debra Wittmaier

**Monthly contributors*

