Current information about the CHA/PA Physician Assistant Program at the University of Colorado Denver.

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CHA/PA Newsletter

Read on to learn more about student rotations abroad, faculty and staff participation in the PAEA national conference, and much more!

Specialized Education in Pediatric Critical and Acute Care

Rachael Blea has known that she wanted to help others through medicine since she was a child. She had breathing issues which resulted in numerous doctors’ visits growing up, and her primary care doctor, in particular, left a big impression on

My Clinical Rotation in Nepal

In September of this year, Alison Barbieri and I completed a clinical rotation at Dhuilikhel Hospital, a regional hospital in the Kathmandu Valley, as part of the Global Health
her. She decided she wanted to emulate his sympathy and dedication in her own life. While volunteering at Open Bible Medical Clinic in Colorado Springs, she learned about the role of PAs and was hooked. Interestingly, Rachael pursued International Trap Shooting at the Olympic level while pursuing her undergraduate degree in Biology at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. She was a Resident Athlete at the Olympic Training Center from 2009–2014. She joined the CHA/PA class of 2017 a couple years after graduation. One of her biggest hurdles as a PA student has been balancing her family life with her studies. Her approach has been to focus in on finding effective study methods that optimize her learning so that she had time for her husband and step-daughter. Rachael has chosen to specialize her education by participating in the Pediatric Critical and Acute Care longitudinal experience. This experience provides training to students in pediatric acute and critical care medicine throughout the three years of the program. Specialized instruction and clinical experiences with critical care physicians and physician assistants occur at Children’s Hospital Colorado. This type of instruction can lead to careers in pediatric emergency rooms, intensive care

Track. The Global Health Track is designed to provide educational and experiential opportunities for students interested in international health care. The Kathmandu Valley experienced the effects of the 2015 earthquakes as they were one of the regional hospitals identified for overflow patients. Additionally, many of the clinical staff provided on the ground relief support by going into the areas with the highest destruction. We were able to see patients that still experience health issues related to the earthquake, as well as common problems that are prevalent to this area such as COPD, Tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. Rural Nepal also saw many of the common problems rural areas experience, such as shortages of pharmaceutical supplies, equipment malfunctions, and lack of funding. We had the pleasure of working closely with the doctors and interns in the Internal Medicine clinic and OB/GYN. The internal medicine doctors cover both the outpatient and inpatient clinics, so we spent our days with ward rounds, assisting in clinic and completing discharge orders. Seeing all aspects of care allowed for us to experience how the clinical team provides care in an under resourced setting. The hospital also has remote clinic care to areas within a 4–hour drive. We were able to go with a clinical team to a remote clinic two hours away! Overall, Nepal
units, and other acute pediatric care settings. Rachael has grown tremendously in her knowledge of critical care physiology, treatments, and management plans with extra exposure to this field. “It has been incredibly humbling to be part of the Pediatric Critical and Acute Care experience because it is the first one like it in the country. The CHA/PA program did an outstanding job creating such a well-collaborated experience.” As Rachael looks toward her graduation this spring, she plans to pursue pediatrics in some capacity. Until then, she is gathering further exposure to various fields in her third year of clinical rotations while enjoying backpacking, mountain biking, skiing, and a day at the range when she can.

welcomed us and this experience furthered our commitment to global health.

Erin Chojnacki
Class of 2017

Serving Together at the Denver Food Bank

CHA/PA students, faculty, and staff spent an afternoon at the Denver Food Bank in early November. They sorted, bagged and boxed over 6,500 pounds of potatoes. A serving is a little over a pound and serves a family of 4, so they prepared enough for over 25,000 people!

UPI Scholarship Recipient

This past fall I was honored to receive a Primary Care Scholarship from University Physicians Incorporated (UPI). UPI provides business and administrative support to medical providers at the
University of Colorado School of Medicine. The new Primary Care Scholarship was established by the organization to support students of the CHA/PA Program interested in working in primary care (Family Medicine, General Pediatrics and outpatient Internal Medicine) upon graduation, preferably in Colorado or Wyoming.

The money from this scholarship will help me pursue my goal of practicing medicine at a family clinic in a small community. I grew up in a town of 5,000 people in southeastern Minnesota, and I spent a lot of my childhood visiting my grandparents, who live in rural farming communities. I enjoy being able to walk down the street or go to the grocery store and know almost everyone I meet. I love the close-knit feeling of a small town and the genuine care that people have for their neighbors and community members. I also recognize and appreciate the importance of access to quality health care among rural populations. I’ve witnessed first-hand how grateful people are to have a medical provider in their community. The CHA/PA program has already provided me with some wonderful primary care opportunities, and I look forward to learning much more. Upon graduation, I hope to serve my patients in all aspects of their health and well-being, so they can enjoy

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**Increasing Awareness of the PA Profession**

One of the things I love most about the PA profession is how it has roots in, and currently increases, access to health care for underserved populations. It’s one of the many reasons I decided to leave the teaching profession and enter the medical field. Research shows that having a diverse racial and ethnic workforce decreases barriers to care, particularly for underserved populations, and increases health care outcomes overall. However, there is a vast underrepresentation of ethnic minority groups in the PA profession, as compared to their representation in the US population. Of the 5,986 matriculants to PA programs in 2013, 75.1% were white, 7.3% Hispanic, 2.8% black, 8.2% Asian, and .2% Native American, with whites having the highest matriculant-to-applicant ratio and blacks having the lowest. Increasing awareness of the PA profession in diverse and underserved communities is important to me as a current PA student and chair of the Silver Society Diversity & Outreach Committee. Furthermore, a study of PA practice found that PAs from underrepresented groups were significantly more likely to work in underserved areas, as well as enter the primary care setting.
Thus, during PA Week this year, a group of 5 classmates and I went to George Washington High School in Denver to talk to students about the wonderful career that is being a PA. As a former high school Biology teacher, stepping back into the hallways of a high school was an exercise in déjà vu. But Ms. Peterson, the ROTC instructor, could not have been more welcoming to us. And I had a great time being able to flex my teaching muscles again. The roughly 50 students present asked so many great questions and were thoroughly engaged in our presentation (especially when we told them the average PA salary). We talked about the PA profession, the CHA/PA program in particular, why each of us decided to become PAs, and had mini auscultation and DTR workshops. While none of the students knew what PAs were at the start of the presentation, I am hopeful that many will work to make that their career choice in the future.
Kevin Bogart, MPAS, PA–C
Teaching Human Factors Science to Improve Patient Safety–Joyce Nieman, MHS, MLS, PA–C & David Eckhardt, MS, PA–C
Transforming Learning: Results from a Flipped Classroom–Rebecca Maldonado, MSHPE, PA–C
PANCE Performance: Can the Future Be Predicted?–Kay Denler, BA & Jacqueline Sivahop, MS, PA–C

CHA/PA in the News

Future Educator Scholarship

In October, I was flown to Minneapolis, Minnesota for a weekend of learning and brainstorming with like–minded students. I was at the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) conference. This conference is meant for PA educators around the country to get together to discuss scholastic issues, experiences, research and techniques. The Future Educator Fellowship was the opportunity for me to join this conference as a student and learn about the ways that I could help improve our profession through advocacy and education. I had been interested in PA education and felt like my experience as a student was a key component to helping guide the evolution of PA school. At the conference, I met 24 other PA students from around the country. It was incredibly inspiring to meet so many intelligent, dedicated, and passionate people. Over the weekend we learned about pathways to and opportunities within PA education, PA advocacy, and challenges faced by our faculty. Also, we discussed the projects that we were asked to do as part of the fellowship. My project is focused on helping the preceptor crisis and aims to improve relations between our current preceptor pool and the
Faculty member Rebecca Maldonado presented a workshop entitled, "How Deficiencies in Reasoning Present in the Clinical Environment" at the International Conference on Clinical Reasoning in Montreal with Jeannette Guerrasio, MD.

Other student projects ranged from creating a curriculum to increase knowledge of infectious diseases to creating opportunities for PA student to rotate through clinics of transgender patients. I've come back more inspired and energized than ever to become a future educator for generations of PA students to come.

Christine Cork
Class of 2017

Job Listings
Graduates – don't forget that you can find job listings on our website. New opportunities are listed weekly.

Interested in precepting CHA/PA students?
Have you considered precepting CHA/PA students? Find out about the advantages of training up our next generation of PA students and find contact information on the Preceptor section of our website.

Contact Information:
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