

Physician Assistant Education

Preceptor Newsletter



Program Update

As we continue to navigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the PA Program faculty and staff work daily to develop new ideas and methods to safely and creatively continue our mission of developing diverse clinicians focused on delivery of exceptional, team-based care to all, while prioritizing student wellness and self-care. The UNMC PA program has always fostered an environment of support and camaraderie. These true colors are evident as we continue to support each other, our students, and clinical preceptors to prioritize competency and wellness during the pandemic.

In the spring, didactic phase of the program, the Class of 2022 launched into Adult & Pediatric Medicine, Pharmacology and Clinical Skills courses (among others) in January. To keep our students safe, all lectures are occurring online via Zoom for the

spring semester. We are so thankful for all of our guest lecturers who are willing to teach online this spring!

Students are still doing physical exam labs in person, as well as OSCEs and all exams. Though we did not anticipate teaching in a hybrid online and in-person format before COVID-19, we are extremely grateful to be able to offer our same rigorous curriculum in this format to keep students on track to start clinical rotations this fall. The students have been exceptionally adaptable and are demonstrating their competency in these virtual and in-person settings. Be assured you will have well-trained, competent, eager UNMC PA students ready to join you this fall for clinical rotations.

In the clinical phase of the program, we have now noted a decrease in rotation cancellations due to

see MAIN pg 3

Legislative Corner

The 107th Nebraska Legislature kicked off its 90-day session on January 6, 2021. Introduction of bills addressing measures to improve telehealth access and secure payment parity for telehealth services are anticipated. A couple of the bills introduced of interest to PAs include:

LB53 (Lathrop) – Provide immunity for health care providers acting in conformance with the crisis standard of care during a COVID-19 state of emergency

LB86 (Bostelman) – Require registration for the prescription drug monitoring system for dispensers or prescribers

LB160 (Wayne) – Increase limits on medical malpractice liability and change provisions regarding financial responsibility and the Excess Liability Fund

More updates to come as the session progresses.



New Addition to the Faculty!



Kate is a native of Nebraska, raised in Mitchell. She has been a board certified Physician Assistant for the past 15 years. She completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Human Biology from Chadron State College in 2003. She then earned her Master of Physician Assistant Studies in 2005 from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Kate completed her Doctor of Medical Science from the University of Lynchburg in 2021. Her clinical background includes Pediatrics, Family Medicine, active duty Army, and Hospitalist.

"I am excited to join the faculty in the PA program at UNMC. I greatly valued my training here and I knew early in my career that I wanted to return to Omaha and teach. Teaching provides important opportunities for me to give back to Nebraska and my alma mater. I enjoy educating and mentoring our PA students as they train to become highly competent clinicians. I am proud to work with our faculty and clinical partners who are dedicated to our profession and to graduating the next generation of PAs. It has been over 10 years since I lived in Nebraska, and it is good to be back."

The UNMC PA Program and Clinical Team is excited to welcome Kate West, DMSc, PA-C, onboard!

Here's more about Kate in her own words:

2020 Virtual Graduation



UNMC College of Allied Health Professions Holds Virtual December 2020 Graduation Ceremony

This year, to adhere to COVID restrictions and protect the well-being of our faculty and students, the College of Allied Health Professions PA program December graduation ceremony was held virtually via Zoom. While we all missed the ability to be present to celebrate in person with our graduates, the virtual ceremony did allow us to be a part of their accomplishment!

Each student's name, hometown, and degree were announced individually while a photo of them was displayed on Zoom. A live shot of the students' hooding (by family or friend) was shared for the audience as well.

A recording of the live ceremony is [available here](#).

We are proud of the achievements of the Class of 2020 and their perseverance throughout the challenges of attending PA school during a novel pandemic! They will be strong providers and representatives of our profession in the years to come.

Congratulations on a job well-done!

restrictions imposed by COVID-19. Our clinical team has been continuously working to identify new sites and providers that are available to support students in the completion of their required clinical clerkships, especially in the high shortage areas of pediatrics and women's health. Alternative learning methods are being explored to help supplement these specialty areas, including live virtual rotations, supplemental knowledge-based learning modules and case-based studies with OSCE-format presentations. Rotation sites have also integrated PA students into telehealth visits with patients to ensure the ability for students to

continue their clinical learning. As always, students will still be held to the same program requirements and competencies for completion of their education, per the ARC-PA guidelines.

To facilitate the ability for students to continue in clinical learning environments, UNMC relaxed restrictions on COVID direct patient care access for students in fall 2020. UNMC PA students, while utilizing proper PPE, may now directly interact with patients that are at high risk of or diagnosed with COVID-19. To facilitate the ability for students to acquire adequate PPE, including N95 masks, the CAHP implemented

a fit-testing process in conjunction with the College of Public Health to ensure all students were equipped for January clinical learning returns.

As we progress into the spring of 2021 and the preparation of another clinical year for the Class of 2022, rotation scheduling has begun anew. Preceptors will be receiving requests for the upcoming class of clinical year students. We are deeply grateful for the continued support of our dedicated network of Nebraska providers throughout the hardships of the pandemic and beyond. We could not do this without you!

Preceptor Spotlight



Heidi Larson, PA-C



Heidi truly enjoys teaching and mentoring PA students. She has done so throughout her years of practice in both family medicine and pediatrics. She feels that the students come to her well-prepared and ready to learn. They pose great questions and often an alternate way of thinking that stimulates continual learning for all involved. Students often present the most current ideas on medical topics, as well, which assists in her own lifelong learning practice.

When asked if she has advice for providers considering precepting students, Heidi simply says "Try it!" She has never been disappointed in the years invested in preparing the future generations of PAs and colleagues.

A typical day precepting students in her practice includes clinic hours that begin at 8 a.m. in an outpatient setting. In the morning, time is allocated to well-child, preventive visits and afternoons include wellness and sick visits. If patients are hospitalized,

rounding is completed prior to morning clinic time. She also shares a call schedule, which students attend with her.

To incorporate students into her busy schedule, Heidi often has the student see a patient on their own while she sees another, followed by case reporting and collaboration on findings and then review of patient exam and management plans together. At times, they will see patients together with her completing the interview while the student completes exam components.

While she does report that students can slow a routine, she has established a comfortable format for inclusion of them into her typical schedule.

When she is not working, Heidi enjoys reading, spending time outdoors, camping and Scouting. She will soon be organizing a new girls' troop in Scouting BSA. Thank you, Heidi, for your dedication to the clinical education of our students!

Heidi Larson, PA-C is our spotlight preceptor in this edition. Heidi is originally from Omaha, Neb. She completed her undergraduate degree in Chemistry at Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln, Neb., and her Physician Assistant degree at the University of Nebraska Medical Center PA Program. Following completion of her PA studies, Heidi spent five years in Family Medicine in Crete, Neb., and then another 5½ years in Viborg, S.D.

She is currently employed by Regional West in Scottsbluff, Neb., in pediatric practice.

Preceptor Pearls

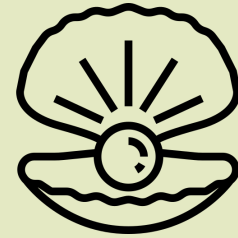
How to Incorporate Constructive Feedback

- Consider use of a personality assessment tool or communication style tool for students in order to educate preceptors on adapting feedback to best suit learning style. Many tools are available for free on the Internet and take little time to administer. One recommended resource is Now, Discover Your Strengths.
- Consider the development of a pre-rotation meeting where mutually agreed-upon goals, objectives, and performance evaluation are established.
- Create a forum where more experienced and talented preceptors can share their

knowledge. This forum can be as simple as a discussion session where preceptors share examples of feedback sessions that went very poorly and very well. This kind of open forum can foster preceptor-to-preceptor coaching and guidance, which can be rewarding to preceptors and enriching to the program. Another possibility for enhancing feedback skills is to engage students. Students can be included in an open discussion session previously described to talk about the traits of feedback that have been most useful to them. This creates a unique situation where the students become teachers and are valued as a critical part of the quality of the program. Students might also be included in an open survey asking for examples of feedback that were very good

and what was good about them. Compilation of student feedback on preceptors can also provide useful, individualized information for preceptors on specific areas for improvement on feedback skills.

- Understand the factors and strategies that affect the quality of feedback. Practice incorporating these into weekly feedback sessions to improve preceptor skill set.



Preceptor Development: Providing Effective Feedback. Hosp Pharm. 2013 Jan; 48(1): 26–32.

Students



Despite COVID restrictions, students in Omaha were still able to participate in the Annual Ugly Christmas Sweater event.



Students practice intubation skills during an airway management training session on the Omaha campus.



Students participate in Clinical Skills Vital Signs lab on the Kearney campus.



Respirator Fit Testing Clinic at the Health Science Education Center in Kearney

Adjunct Faculty Status for Clinical Preceptors

Category I CME Credit

- The UNMC Division of PA Education is approved by AAPA to award AAPA Category I CME credit to eligible PA preceptors. PAs may earn a maximum of 20 AAPA Category 1 CME credits for clinical precepting during any single calendar year.
- For further details on Category I CME certificates, please contact carey.wheelhouse@unmc.edu.

You can become an adjunct faculty member of the UNMC PA Program! To qualify, preceptors should meet the following criteria:

- Active PA Preceptors that host student rotations
- Preceptors committed to continuing to host rotations in consecutive years **AND/OR**
- Commitment to ongoing lecture presentations or clinical skills teaching in the didactic year

If you are interested in inquiring about qualification, benefits with adjunct faculty status, or application, please contact: Mia Hyde at mia.hyde@unmc.edu.



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Who can be a Preceptor?

If you are a licensed health care provider and have an interest in educating students in your medical practice, please contact the Clinical Education Team for the University of Nebraska Medical Center Physician Assistant Program at mia.hyde@unmc.edu or call 308-865-1128.

unmc.edu/alliedhealth/education/pa