

Physician Assistant Education

Preceptor Newsletter



PA Named #2 Healthcare Job

On January 11, 2022 U.S. News & World Report named the Physician Assistant occupation as the #2 Best Health Care Job and the #3 Best Job Across All Occupations on their annual Best Jobs List. This is the fifth year that the PA occupation has been listed in the U.S. News & World Report's top 2 health care jobs in the country!

AAPA President, Jennifer Orozco, MMS, PA-C, DFAAPA, states the following:

"Year after year, our profession continues to be named among the very best jobs in our country by U.S. News & World Report. Now more than ever, our country needs more PAs, and this national recognition shines a light on the essential role PAs have in healthcare and will surely encourage many individuals to pursue a career in medicine as a PA. For me, this underscores the fact that PAs are integral to not only our patients but the future of our nation's health. Recognition like this rededicates me to my patients and this meaningful profession."

According to the U.S. News, scores are based on seven component measures including median salary, unemployment rate, 10-year growth volume, 10-year growth percentage, future job prospects, stress level, and work-life balance.

This ongoing national recognition supports the essential role that PAs play in health care and will continue to stimulate interest in pursuit of our career in younger generations.

*Adapted from https://www.aapa.org/news-central/2022/01/pa-named-2-best-health-care-job-by-u-s-news-world-report/?utm_source=pres_letter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=gov

CMS Reimbursement Changes- Direct Payment to PAs and Split/Shared Visit Billing

Direct Payment to PAs

CMS released the 2022 Physician Fee Schedule, solidifying the ability for PAs to receive direct payment for Medicare services. CMS has authorized PAs to receive direct payments from Medicare, removing administrative barriers, including the hiring and utilization of PAs. At this time, this change will only apply to the Medicare system (not commercial insurance or Medicaid). Medicare regulations defer to the laws in each state.

Split/Shared Visit Billing

Beginning 1/1/22, CMS will be changing billing policies for critical care services and specific visits in both skilled and non-skilled nursing facilities. The definition for the "substantive portion" of a split/shared visit was changed by CMS. Currently, Medicare pays at 100% when billed by a physician and 85% if billed by a PA or NP. Starting in 2022, a substantive portion of the service by a physician is defined as:

1. Physician personally performs either the history, exam, or entire medical decision making
2. The physician spends more than half of the total time by both the

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physician and the PA/NP in both face-to-face and non-face-to-face patient encounters

For time-based services such as critical care and discharge management, the substantive portion of care is determined based on which provider spent greater than half of the combined time caring for the patient. Starting in 2023, time will be the only factor used to define the substantive portion of care. The healthcare provider who spends the majority of the time providing care to the patient will have the services billed under their name/NPI.

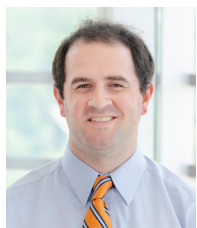
For a physician to bill a service as split/shared, the following qualifications must be met:

1. The physician and PA/NP must work for the same group
2. The physician and PA/NP must see the patient on the same (calendar) day.
3. Services must be performed at a hospital, facility, or hospital outpatient office.
4. The documentation in the medical record must identify the physician and PA/NP who provided care during the visit. The healthcare provider who performed the substantive portion of the visit (billing provider) must sign and date the medical record.

In the future, CMS will require a modifier (not yet released) to be placed on split/shared claims.

-Contributed by Melissa Soester, PhD, PA-C; Nebraska Academy of PAs Reimbursement Committee

New Medical Director at UNMC PA Program: Ryan Mullane, DO



With the recent retirement of our long-time medical director, Dr. Gerald Moore, the UNMC PA Program has appointed Dr. Ryan Mullane to assume this position.

Following a thorough search process in 2021, Dr.

Mullane was selected to provide this leadership role in our department.

Ryan Mullane, DO is involved in both academics, with the UNMC Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Nephrology, and medical practice, with Nebraska Medicine, Internal Medicine Specialty Clinic at Durham, Omaha.

Dr. Mullane attended medical school at Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in Virginia, completed his internal medicine residency at Verde Valley Medical Center in Arizona, and then completed his fellowship in nephrology at UNMC College of Medicine.

Dr. Mullane has been dedicated to PA education throughout his time at UNMC, serving as a didactic lecturer, facilitator and a clinical preceptor in nephrology. He has shown a very strong commitment in support of the PA profession and the education of our students.

We are excited to welcome Dr. Mullane and look forward to working closely with him in future departmental endeavors.

New faculty at UNMC PA Program: Melissa Soester, PhD, PA-C



The UNMC PA Program and Clinical Team is excited to welcome Melissa Soester, PhD, PA-C onboard! Melissa was born and raised in Nebraska City. She has been a board-certified Physician Assistant for the

past 16 years. She completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Human Biology from Chadron State College in 2003 and participated in the Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP). She then earned her Master of Physician Assistant Studies in 2005 from UNMC. Melissa completed her Ph.D. in Health Sciences from the University of South Dakota in May of 2021. Her clinical background includes Family Medicine, Emergency medicine, and Urgent care.

Here's more about Melissa in her own words:

"I am excited to be joining the University of Nebraska Medical Center Physician Assistant Program as a faculty member. I had a great experience at UNMC as a student and am excited to give back to the university and its students. I have spent the majority of my clinical career working in rural and underserved areas of Nebraska. I appreciate the relationships I have built with my patients, students, and colleagues. I look forward to building relationships with our program's clinical preceptors and appreciate all you do to help our students."

In her spare time, Melissa enjoys spending time with her husband Cameron and two sons, Braden (15) and Brecken (10).

New Administrative member at UNMC PA Program: Chuck Fletcher, MAEd



We are happy to welcome Chuck Fletcher, M.A.Ed to our clinical education team. Chuck has joined our college and department as the clinical education programs supervisor. This is not Chuck's first position

in an academic setting. In his past position at College of Saint Mary, he was instrumental in the development phases and ARC-PA accreditation process, serving as their clinical education liaison. Chuck also worked at Indiana State University in the Advanced Practice Nursing program.

Chuck will be working closely with the clinical team and preceptors in scheduling student rotations, coordinating clinical rotation site and student needs and documentation, and supervising staff of the College of Allied Health Professions.

Chuck is originally from Council Bluffs, Iowa but has been a Nebraskan since 2014. He is married with 3 daughters- one in high school, another in middle school and the youngest in elementary. Consequently, his schedule is a busy one. Chuck and his wife are members of the Lifegate Church and are involved in several volunteer activities there. In addition, he enjoys board games, Dodger baseball and deer hunting.

Preceptor Spotlight



Jason Bspalec, MD

Jason Bspalec, MD has been a preceptor for UNMC PA students since June 1998. Dr. Bspalec completed his undergraduate B.S. degree at Nebraska Wesleyan University, his M.S. in Anatomy at UNMC, and his M.D. and Fellowship in Rural Medicine at UNMC. He serves as a family medicine provider to the rural community of Geneva, NE and surrounding

area. Although Dr. Bspalec provides complete family care, he has special interest in the areas of Obstetrics/Gynecology and Pediatrics. Dr. Bspalec has been with Fillmore County Medical Center, as an original owner since its inception in November 2004. Dr. Bspalec grew up in Crete, NE and always envisioned himself practicing in small-town Nebraska. Students attending rural rotations with Dr. Bspalec can expect to gain a wealth of knowledge and hands-on experience caring for all ages of patients in all settings. Feedback from UNMC PA students reports that Dr. Bspalec and his team are very responsive and interactive with students, allowing ample opportunities for students to participate in patient cases and clinical skill practice.

What motivates you to be a preceptor?

I want to assist in preparing the next generation of providers to practice excellent quality medicine into the future.

What advice do you have for others considering precepting students?

It is extremely rewarding and will make you a better provider.

When Dr. Bspalec is not in the clinic, he enjoys singing and playing the bass guitar in his church and in a band called "Home by 10." He plays golf in the summer, likes to travel and spend time with his family.

Thank you for your dedication to clinical education and your ongoing support of our UNMC PA students!

Students in Research

Class of 2021 Capstone Presentations

In December 2021, students in the UNMC PA Class of 2021 presented their final capstone projects to program faculty and peers. Throughout the clinical year, each student continued to build upon their didactic foundation of research, participating in journal club presentations and capstone project research. Students completed a 20-minute presentation on a research topic of their choice, with some students opting to conduct original research. Examples of original research topics include analyzing results of provider-completed surveys

regarding telehealth utilization in patient care and massive transfusion protocols in postpartum patients. Topics for literature reviews included, but were not limited to, the relationship between intermittent fasting and weight, the effects of gendered racism on health, and a review of current research involving kidney transplantation.

In addition to presenting their research project, students attended capstone presentations of their classmates and participated in question

and answer sessions. Students and faculty alike remarked on the wealth of knowledge in the capstone presentations and enjoyed learning about a variety of topics from students in the UNMC PA Class of 2021.

– Contributed by Carey Wheelhouse, MSPAS, PA-C; UNMC PA Department Director of Clinical Assessment

Student Photos

UNMC Class of 2021 Graduation

Graduation took place on December 17, 2021, with an in-person Convocation ceremony at the Hilton Omaha and Commencement ceremony at Baxter Arena. Students welcomed the opportunity to share this special event with family and friends. We are proud of our Class of 2021 UNMC PA graduates!





UNMC Class of 2023

The newest incoming class of 2023 PA students arrived in August 2021. We were excited to witness their White Coat Ceremony and look forward to working with them as they navigate the journey towards PA-C.



Preceptor Pearls

Part 2 of 6 – Communicate with everyone involved in the rotation.



Communication is the key to ensuring a successful teaching experience. It is essential that you express your expectations and goals to students, their educational program and your fellow clinicians and staff members. Prior to the arrival of the student at your practice site, the program should share the learning objectives and rotational course expectations for the clerkship.

Students and preceptors should communicate early and frequently regarding expectations, goals, and learning/teaching styles. This saves time and prevents frustration. Soon after the beginning of the rotation, start talking with students about their progress and the extent to which they are meeting their educational goals. Have students keep track of what types of patients they have seen and which procedures and clinical activities they have been involved in, such as history-taking and patient education. Ask, "Is there any type of patient we need to

have you work with today or conditions we need to discuss in more depth?" This helps students focus on their goals and helps you focus on meeting their needs. Ask questions that elicit reflection, such as, "What did you learn today?" These discussions could direct future sessions or independent study topics.

Feedback is essential for evaluation, and it can prevent repetitive, time-wasting mistakes. Be sure to provide students with continuous feedback, and ask them about their experience with questions such as, "Is there a different way that I could teach to help your education?" If you have any concerns about a student's progress or ability, contact the student's educational program immediately.

Because students become part of the clinical team, it is important that preceptors and students communicate with fellow clinicians

and staff members. Preceptors should begin with the attitude that students add value to the practice. This approach will then likely spread to partners and clinic staff, and in such an environment, students will be more likely to make significant contributions. Ensuring buy-in from partners and clinic staff will save time for everyone by preventing misunderstandings and duplication of effort. Supportive colleagues can also enhance the student's educational experience. Be sure to let your colleagues know if the students need experience with certain procedures or conditions. You could say something like, "The student needs more work with diabetic patients. Could you let us know if you see any opportunities for that today?"

1. Biagioli, FE, Chappelle, KG. (2010). How To Be An Efficient and Effective Preceptor. *Family Practice Management*, 2010 May/June, 18 - 21.

CME Credit for UNMC PA Preceptors

PA preceptors may earn a total of 2 AAPA Category 1 CME credits per 40-hour work week of PA student preceptorship, with a maximum of 20 AAPA Category 1 CME credits awarded per calendar year. This will allow PA preceptors to satisfy 80% of their Category 1 CME requirement. And with the ability to claim additional time precepting as Category 2 CME, clinical teaching can now satisfy up to 90% of the 2-year NCCPA certification maintenance requirement!

Physician and Nurse Practitioner preceptors can request certificates of clinical teaching hours completed with UNMC PA students as well.

For CME requests and questions, please contact: Kailee Strawmier at kailee.strawmier@unmc.edu

Did You Know...?

Nebraska PA Practice Profile:

Number of PAs in Nebraska: **1,150+**

Number of PAs in the US: **140,000+**

Percent of PAs by Specialty in NE:

28.9% Family Medicine

24.8% Surgical Subspecialties

17.4% All Other Specialties

9.4% Internal Medicine Subspecialties

8.1% Emergency Medicine

4.7% Urgent Care

4.0% General Pediatrics, General Internal Medicine

32.9% of PAs specialize in Primary Care (Primary Care includes Family Medicine, General Internal Medicine and General Pediatrics).

In Nebraska, **30.8%** of PAs serve in rural areas.

* Adapted from AAPA 2019 Salary Survey



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

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Adjunct Faculty Status for Clinical Preceptors

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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