



Washington Academy of Physician Assistants

NEWSLETTER

Washington Academy of Physician Assistants

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A LETTER FROM THE WAPA PRESIDENT

Spring is here, and things are hopping at WAPA!

As a member, you will have had the opportunity to vote for the president-elect and your AAPA House of Delegates (HOD) representatives for 2025. The 2024 representatives are preparing to be your voice in Houston as the HOD convenes on May 17th. The CME committee is working to make our fall conference as great as the outstanding spring conference, and membership is working with PAs in large organizations to sign up their PA employees as a group to ease the red tape of reimbursement for your membership dues.

WAPA had a successful legislative session with the passage of the PA Collaboration Bill, most of which will take effect in January 2025. Specific information about our bill and others affecting PA practice in Washington is available at WAPA.com. The "End of Session" report was compiled by our WAPA lobbyist, Chelsea Hager, without whom we would not have succeeded!

I also want to highlight eleven organizations that supported our campaign for collaboration: Kaiser Permanente, Doctors Who Care, WA Association for Community Health, Coordinated Care, Providence, WA State Nurses Association, The Patient Coalition of Washington, Foundation for Health Generations, Bleeding Disorder Foundation of Washington, The ARNPs United of Washington State, and ZoomCare. Dr. Gary Morsch, from Doctors Who Care, actually testified for us this session.

I'm happy to say Washington was the fourth state to pass the PA Licensure Compact Bill. Prior to our session, Delaware, Utah, and Wisconsin passed the bill. West Virginia, Nebraska, and Virginia followed closely on our heels, so now the compact can move forward. Although these seven states have "activated" the compact, it will still be an estimated 18-24 months before it becomes "operational" and PAs can more fluidly practice in participating states.

Also of note, Oregon is the first state to pass legislation to change our professional title to Physician Associate. The rest of the states, including Washington, will begin to work towards that goal. We will make it, but as our PA Collaboration Bill demonstrated, it will take all of us. We need each and every PA in Washington to be a part of WAPA which will make us a strong voice in Olympia. Your participation is crucial to our success.



Dr. Linda Dale
DH.ED, PA-C
President, WAPA

#WAPAstrong
#PASgobeyond
#Wecandoit!



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LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE | NEWLY PASSED PA BILLS EXPLAINED

by Paul Surette, MPAS, PA-C

The 2024 legislative session in Olympia has come to a close. It was a short 60-day session packed with more than 1,100 bills introduced and over 1,000 eligible bills from 2023 that were carried over to this session. Despite the staggering number of items presented to lawmakers, WAPA had an incredibly successful legislative session, passing two major PA bills.

WAPA counts among our successes in this session **HB 2041, Physician Assistant Collaborative Practice**. This bill was largely successful due to excellent representation and lobbying by WAPA, as well as the tireless efforts of our lobbyist, Chelsea Hager, and WAPA President, Linda Dale, PA-C, in establishing the groundwork for this bill. It was sponsored by Rep. Marcus Riccelli (D-Spokane) and establishes PA collaborative practice for experienced PAs. It was passed in both chambers and signed by the governor on March 13, 2024.

Most parts of HB 2041 will go into effect on January 1, 2025, with a few provisions taking effect July 1, 2025. Expect to hear more from WAPA and the WA Medical Commission about how the bill will be implemented and what to expect. The following is a brief highlight of the bill features:

- The bill replaces the supervision model for experienced PAs with a collaboration model. In this model, PAs can interact, consult, or refer to a physician or other appropriate members of the health care team as indicated by the patient's condition, the education, experience, and competencies of the physician assistant, and the standard of care.
- The bill authorizes collaborative practice for PAs who have over 4,000 hours of post-graduate clinical experience and 2,000 hours of specialty experience. PAs are supervised until that point.
- A PA's scope of practice mirrors that of their participating physician or the group of physicians with whom the PA works in that specialty area(s) or department. PAs with 10 years or 20,000 hours of specialty experience can work outside the scope of their participating physician(s) if they continue to obtain CME in that specialty and work in a medically underserved or rural area. This expanded scope must be described in a collaboration agreement.
- PAs will enter into collaboration agreements, which a participating physician or the PA employer (such as a medical director) can sign. The agreement is kept at the practice site and must only be sent to the WA Medical Commission if requested.
- The bill removes the physician-to-PA ratio. Employers can staff their teams as they deem appropriate, and physicians can collaborate with as many PAs as they would like.
- The bill authorizes direct pay for PA-provided care. This is especially helpful for PAs who don't have an employment relationship with their participating physician or when a PA needs to reassign their payments. The bill does not affect PA reimbursement rates.
- The bill makes PAs legally responsible for their medical decisions. The bill removed physician liability for care provided by PAs. This addresses one of the main reasons we hear physicians are not opting to hire and work with PAs.

WAPA was also successful in this legislative session by bringing about the passage of HB1917 & SB 5815 on Physician Assistant Licensure Compact. These bills were sponsored by Rep. Mari Leavitt (D-University Place) and Ron Muzzle (R-Oak Harbor). The governor signed the PA Compact bill on the same date as HB 2041. Since the signing, several other states have passed the bill, which has met the threshold of seven states minimum to enact the compact. This does not yet mean PAs can practice in other compact member states. Instead, there is still an estimated 18-24 month process before the compact is fully operational.



*[Check Out the PA
Playbook Podcast Today!](#)*

This bill will essentially ease and expedite the licensure process for PAs who move to other states or wish to practice in multiple states. Other states that have successfully passed the PA Licensure Compact include Iowa, Delaware, Utah, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maine. For more information on the PA compact timeline and how it will work, please go to <https://www.pacompact.org/about-pa-licensure-compact/> or visit AAPA's information page at <https://www.aapa.org/advocacy-central/pa-licensure-compact/>

We are proud of our work in representing our members' interests in this legislative session. There is still plenty of work to be done, and I look forward to sharing more in the future on how we are making Washington a better place to be a PA. I encourage your involvement and engagement on any level you are able and willing to commit to this effort. It is with our combined efforts that we are able to represent the powerful positive impact we have on healthcare delivery so decision-makers place PAs favorably in rule-making, increasing our strength in the healthcare delivery marketplace to practice at the top of our training and become viewed as the healthcare leaders in Washington that we are.



GROWTH OF FRED HUTCHINSON CANCER CENTER APP FELLOWSHIP

by Hira Bluestone, PA-C, MMSc

Advanced Practice Provider (APP) fellowships are increasing in number as newly graduating APPs seek to bridge gaps between training and clinical practice, particularly as they work towards careers in medical and surgical subspecialties following their graduation. Fred Hutchinson Cancer Care has had an APP fellowship focusing on general oncology since 2018. The fellowship draws applicants from around the country seeking to deepen their understanding and experience in oncology at a world-class institution that allows APPs to work at the maximum capacity within their scope and are an integrative part of the medical teams throughout the institution.

In 2023, an acute care track was added to the fellowship, allowing fellows to focus on inpatient oncology, bone marrow transplant, oncology intensive care, and outpatient acute/urgent care of the oncology patient, the first of its kind in the nation. Additionally, the program expanded from accepting three fellows per year with plans to accept up to six each year.

“Our program provides our fellows with a robust oncology foundation [with] strong clinical rotations, structured didactic learning, and dedicated time to professional development,” says Carrie Graham ARNP, fellowship director, “Past fellows have transitioned seamlessly into the workforce upon completion of their fellowship. 100% of our fellows have gone on to work in oncology as well-prepared providers and leaders.”

Washington Academy of Physician Assistants' legislative year has come to an exciting close, and with it, Governor Jay Inslee signed two new bills that improve practice for physician assistants in Washington.





Caitlyn Kerwin, PA-C, one of our current general oncology fellows states, “As a new graduate, participating in this fellowship has allowed me to greatly expand my medical knowledge and sharpen my clinical skills with the guidance of excellent APP preceptors. I have gained a better understanding of the field of oncology, from the broad picture down to the unique features of each subspecialty, which would not have been possible without a fellowship year,” which highlights exactly what we are trying to promote. We offer fellows a unique opportunity for exposure to each subspecialty within oncology, learn from a variety of preceptors, and create educational and professional relationships with APPs and physicians throughout our institution.

“As a recent grad, the fellowship gave me the opportunity to continue to grow my skills and develop the clinical confidence and competence necessary to practice as an independent APP. It also exposed me to the many subspecialties and types of care within oncology. I felt lucky to be able to take a position post-fellowship I already knew was a good fit based on my experiences the year prior,” says Megan Gravelyn, PA-C. She was able to try out several specialties and ultimately decided on a position with the ACE (Acute Care Evaluation) clinic, where she provides urgent and emergent care for oncology patients.

The Fred Hutch APP fellowship is also unique as it provides an opportunity for recent nurse practitioner and physician assistant graduates to work together as fellows. Our institution does not distinguish between the two and provides a collegial and supportive atmosphere for all APPs.

As the need for APPs grows, the demand for postgraduate education increases.

As such, the Fred Hutch fellowship is growing to meet that need. Along with the increase in positions available and the addition of the acute care track, we are currently pursuing advanced practice provider fellowship accreditation (APPFA) through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). The Fred Hutch Fellowship provides supportive and challenging training, exposure to oncologic specialties, and important professional connections, ultimately facilitating a smooth transition to oncology practice.

*“I would still ‘do it again’
despite all the difficulty of
training and roadblocks to
just practice medicine.*

Truly is worth it!”

- James A. Bowden, MD

PRE-PA MENTORING PROGRAM THROUGH PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATES FOR LATINO HEALTH (PALH)

by Paola Gonzalez, PA-C

For over 30 years, Physician Associates for Latino Health (PALH) has been an officially recognized caucus of the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA). Our purpose is not just to render loyal and honest service to the medical profession and the public but to make a tangible difference in the lives of our community. We develop continuing medical education content and promote the diversity of the PA profession, all with the aim of improving healthcare access and quality for our community. Furthermore, PALH aims to increase the diversity of the Academy by encouraging more providers to learn medical Spanish, a language crucial for effective communication and care, which will better support our community.

As the proud leader of PALH, I am happy to share that our focus is on supporting our minority community at the grassroots level through various initiatives. One such initiative I would like to share is our robust Pre-PA Mentoring Program.

Our program began with the aid of PA student Jessica Perez and then Secretary Maria Dalzell, PA-C, who laid the groundwork with one-on-one mentoring that launched in 2022/2023. This program became further strengthened when Secretary Becerra approved our initiative aimed to increase healthcare provider diversity at the first Hispanic Health Summit held at the Health and Human Services (HHS) headquarters in Washington, D.C., in September 2023.

This initiative launched our Pre-PA Mentoring Program with a cohort of thirty-five students nationwide. The results have been nothing short of inspiring. Six have already been accepted into PA school, and many more are applying for the upcoming CASPA cycle. Our goal is not just to provide resources for a strong, polished PA school application but to empower these students to make a difference in our minority communities through shared language, culture, and beliefs.

We also have a PA scholarship program that provides 5-7 scholarships yearly for underrepresented students with financial

hardship. The scholarship program is made possible through our collaboration with Canopy and AAPA/PALH via the NIH-funded Medical Spanish Program. This collaboration is unique and serves a dual purpose: The program offers the purchaser 45 Category 1 CME credits in medical Spanish, and we receive 20% of the proceeds, which go directly into our PA foundation scholarship fund. This promotes both providers' proficiency in Spanish and funds these scholarships. Scholarships are offered in spring and announced at the AAPA annual conference.

We hope you will join our mission. If you want to learn more, we encourage you to reach out to us at www.palh.org. Because together, we can do more—PAs can do that!

#diversitymatters, #representationmatters, #juntostodospuede, #AsociadoMedico #Physician Associate, #PALH, #WAPA.



FEATURED PROVIDER | HANNAH BOUDREAU, MHS, PA-C

by Rhonda Warren, PA-C



Hannah Boudreau, MHS, PA-C, has recently taken on the pivotal role of Interim Chief of Advanced Practice at Virginia Mason Medical Center (VMMC), marking a significant improvement for advanced practice providers (APPs) within the organization. Her position grants her a seat on the Medical Executive Committee, symbolizing a new era of inclusion and representation for the APP community.

Hannah's journey with VMMC began in 2020 after finishing her training in Knoxville, TN. She has since risen to become the clinical lead for neurosurgery. Hannah actively advocated for APPs early in her career at Virginia Mason. She was instrumental in helping secure the first-ever seat for an APP on Virginia Mason's Medical Executive Committee. She revived the quarterly summit for advanced practitioners to ensure they had an APP-lead platform for impactful updates, including those surrounding the integration with Franciscan Health.

As the voice of over 200 APPs at VMMC, which is part of the larger CommonSpirit Health network, Hannah's leadership is instrumental in advocating for their interests and ensuring their contributions are recognized at the highest levels. Her influence extends beyond VMMC, as she actively participates in CommonSpirit's Advanced Practice Leadership Council, Provider Leadership Academy Committee, and the Advanced Practice Executive Leadership Team. Her commitment to excellence is further demonstrated through her role as advisory faculty to CommonSpirit's curriculum development team, where she has been instrumental in creating new orientation guidelines for APPs. Looking ahead, Hannah is dedicated to fostering a more inclusive environment for APPs, ensuring their voices are heard where they have historically been overlooked. Outside of her professional endeavors, she is a proud new mother and an avid enthusiast of the Pacific Northwest's outdoor activities, including skiing, hiking, and mountaineering.

A UNIQUE BURNOUT SOLUTION THAT YOU HAVE LIKELY NEVER CONSIDERED

by Anna K Shoolroy, PA-C | Kadlec Clinic, Richland Primary Care



Burnout is a popular topic, and there are lots of suggestions on ways to decrease or prevent burnout: take a vacation, get regular exercise, eat healthily, meditate, etc. However, the one thing that resolved my burnout is something I didn't find on any of the lists—becoming a preceptor. Yeah, yeah, I hear you! Why would I take on a student when I'm already overwhelmed, overworked, and exhausted!? As the start date drew nearer, I increasingly regretted my decision, especially since

I found out three days before the student started that her rotation had been changed from 4 hours a week to 40 hours a week for 16 weeks. Sure, I could've abandoned ship and complained that I didn't sign up for that commitment, but obviously, this mistake was not the student's fault, and why punish her and stress her out, especially when primary care rotations are extremely difficult to find. It was the best mistake that has happened to me since becoming a PA. Having a student was so energizing and engaging. She was so excited about all the things, no matter how mundane. She challenged me to remember concepts and management strategies I hadn't considered since studying for the PANCE. She reminded me of the small things that really matter that go unappreciated or underappreciated in the day-to-day grind. It's so easy to get bogged down by the never-ending refill requests, phone calls, test results, and patient messages that we overlook the joy we once felt in seeing and hopefully helping people. And yes, I do know how cliché that sounds, but my student really did resolve my feelings of burnout and brought happiness and gratitude back to my daily grind. In closing, I appreciate that not everyone is cut out to be a mentor or preceptor, but if you're even the slightest bit interested, I encourage you to at least try it and see what happens.

LEGISLATION SIGNED INTO LAW TO HELP SUPPORT THE WASHINGTON PHYSICIANS HEALTH PROGRAM

by Chris Bundy, Executive Medical Director and Sheldon Cooper, Executive Director Washington Physicians Health Program

For more than 30 years, Washington Physicians Health Program (WPHP) has been Washington's trusted resource for restoring the health of medical professionals. WPHP's confidential support and exceptional outcomes provide reassurance of safe practice and promote workforce sustainability.

WPHP thanks the Washington Academy of Physician Assistants for supporting House Bill 1972, which Governor Jay Inslee signed into law during the 2024 legislative session. This legislation increases the licensure surcharge fee, which funds WPHP's programs, outreach, and education to support physician assistants and other healthcare professionals now and in the future.



The bill's primary sponsor was Rep. Tarra Simmons, with additional sponsors including Reps. Paul Harris, Julia Reed, Tim Ormsby, and Marcus Riccelli. In the Senate, Sen. Ron Muzzall was the primary sponsor of Senate Bill 5822, the companion bill to HB 1972, with additional sponsors, Sens. Annette Cleveland and Ann Rivers.

In addition to WAPA, the bill also received support from the Washington State Medical Association (WSMA), Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA), Washington State Podiatric Medical Association (WSPMA), Washington State Veterinary Medical Association (WSVMA), Washington Osteopathic Medical Association (WOMA), and the Washington State Dental Association (WSDA).

This milestone underscores the important work WPHP does as an organization on behalf of the medical community. For more information about WPHP, visit wphp.org. Information about HB1972 can be found [here](#).

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NORTHWEST UNIVERSITY LAUNCHES TWO CUTTING-EDGE PROGRAMS IN HEALTH CARE EDUCATION

Kirkland, Wash. – March 12, 2024 – Northwest University is proud to announce the launch of two new programs aimed at shaping the future of healthcare education: the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies and the Doctor of Physical Therapy.

As the demand for qualified healthcare professionals continues to rise, Northwest University is committed to providing innovative educational opportunities that empower students to excel in their chosen fields. These new programs are designed to equip graduates with the knowledge, skills, and hands-on experience necessary to thrive in today's dynamic healthcare landscape.

The Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program prepares students to become competent and compassionate physician assistants capable of delivering high-quality health care across various clinical settings. Through a comprehensive curriculum led by experienced faculty members and enhanced by state-of-the-art facilities, students will gain a deep understanding of medical principles, patient care techniques, and ethical considerations. The program will launch in August of 2024 and will admit a cohort of 40 students each year.

The Doctor of Physical Therapy program is designed to train the next generation of physical therapists to provide evidence-based care and innovative rehabilitation services. With a unique hybrid blend of learning, clinical education, and small class sizes, students will engage in rigorous coursework, clinical rotations, and research opportunities aimed at fostering excellence in patient care. By integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experience, graduates of this program will be poised to address the evolving healthcare needs of diverse populations. The program will launch in the fall of 2024 and will accept 48 students each year.

Expressing enthusiasm for these new academic offerings, Dr. Joseph Castleberry, president of Northwest University, stated, "At Northwest University, we are dedicated to preparing students to lead and serve with integrity in their professions. The launch of these two programs underscores our commitment to excellence in health care education and our mission to equip graduates to make a positive impact—not only in our local community—but around the world."

Prospective students interested in learning more about these programs are encouraged to visit northwestu.edu or contact the Office of Admissions at pa-admissions@northwestu.edu or dpt-admissions@northwestu.edu.

ABOUT NORTHWEST UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1934, Northwest University (NU) is a regionally accredited Christian university located in Kirkland, Washington. With a commitment to academic excellence, spiritual vitality, and cultural engagement, NU offers a wide range of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs designed to prepare students to pursue their passions with excellence and a deep sense of purpose.

MEDIA INQUIRIES

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SOCIAL MEDIA

