



the review

A quarterly newsletter of the North Dakota Academy of Physician Assistants

Cindy Renner, PA-C, Editor

December, 2007

Message from the President



Merry Christmas!
(Politically correct or not) to all my fellow
PAs and PA supporters.

Surprise, I'm back as President! If you're saying "oh not again", then you should think of running for office. Seriously, as some of you may know, Terrie Wold resigned as president this fall due to personal issues (*see resignation letter on page 2*), and as vice president I moved up to that position. I want to thank Terrie for her efforts and I know that she will continue to be a part of our academy.

We have a busy year coming up and we need support from all North Dakota PAs. We are hoping to expand prescription privileges and the more members we have to support this effort, the better chance we will have of being successful. Everyone can help by recruiting new members and talking to legislators.

Plans are in progress for the Spring CME in Fargo May 1st and 2nd. Thank you to Corey Jones and the planning committee for their time and effort. Their pay isn't great, but their satisfaction from a job well done is their reward.

We are looking for volunteers for the leadership seminar "Adventures in Lobbying" in Washington D.C. February 25 & 26. Contact me for details.

As always we are looking for new committee and board members. Contact me or any board member for information concerning the various positions. Our academy is as good as we make it!

Thanks to all the current committee members, chair and board members for their time and effort!

Sincerely,

Wayne Kartes, PA-C

Terrie Wold Resigns As President

After much pondering, reflection and discussion, I regretfully wish to inform you of my resignation as President of the Academy and member of the NDAPA Board. Due to personal issues and urging by my family, I can no longer serve in these positions. I am aware I have been neglectful of my responsibility as President, especially this fall. I appreciate your support and understanding. It has been an honor to serve on the board in several different positions over the past 12 years. North Dakota PA's have greatly benefited from your leadership and I thank you for that. I will be forwarding my files and materials to Wayne Kartes, Vice President NDAPA.

Sincerely,

Terrie Jo Wold NDAPA President

Letter from the Editor...

In addition to providing information and updates about medicine, our colleagues and organization, our PA publications are a forum to share information and PEARLS so that the knowledge and experiences of one can potentially benefit other PA's.

I usually try to make this column lighthearted or entertaining, but will take a different direction this time, in order to share some things I have recently learned.

As many of you may already know, my son Jonathan died in August of a accidental drug overdose, just one month after his 25th birthday. It was unexpected and tragic – the end of an admittedly troubled but still very special life. After struggling with drug addiction since his high school years, multiple in-patient and out-patient treatment programs and nearly dying in 2006, he seemed to be doing better. He had been drug free for a year, was working steady, living in his own little rented house, had a great roommate and had just adopted 2 little puppies. After his death we learned that his old drug dealer had found him, and offered him the drugs. It was apparently more than he could resist, but we think he started back at the level he was taking a year ago. Sometime after August 25 - the last time anyone spoke with him - he lost consciousness and died. His roommate found him August 29th after returning from an out of town trip.

We had adopted him at age 2 ½ months. He was a premie and had spent his first 2 months in neonatal intensive care. We weren't told about him until he was ready for discharge, so no one had visited him that whole time. When I lay awake at night and wonder "what went wrong", I ponder the effect of being a newborn with no familiar face or voice coming to see you – a steady progression of nurses rotating through their shifts, but no one to bond with...

Jon was always such a fragile and sensitive soul. Injustice, unfairness or the misfortunes of others wounded him deeply. He worked as a server at local restaurants over the years, and several of his regular customers came to the funeral. They said how they always asked to be seated in his section, because he seemed to care, and really listen when they might be having a problem or bad day. We learned that he frequently paid for part of a customer's meal, or sat with a lonely person after his long night shift so they wouldn't have to eat alone.

His dad and I had no idea he did this – we just knew he was always broke. He even gave his bug collection away in high school– to a friend who hadn't had time to do one. This meant JON got a zero – but when we asked why he would do such a thing he just said "because James NEEDED it!"

He had an incredible mind. He built several computers and provided tech support for all his friends and relatives. He was embarrassed that he had quit high school, and just had his “Good Enough Degree” as he called the GED, but helped university students with their computer assignments, and read Popular Science from cover to cover each month.

We learned of his death when a policeman and Chaplin came to our door. Friends and family quickly came to offer help and support. One friend came over and quietly went upstairs to clean my bathroom. She said she knew I’d feel bad if it wasn’t presentable with all the company we’d be having!

Here are some things we learned from this experience, which will change how we respond to others going through a similar situation:

to the funeral or send a card. In the past I have sometimes said to myself, "There will be so many people there, what does one more matter, it’s really a private family time- I don’t want to intrude”, or “what could a card say to possibly help in this situation?" Now I know it means so VERY much. Every person who visited, every card, every e-mail, every hug was SO appreciated, and provided the strength we relied on to get through those days.

Send a card even if it’s late. The first 2 weeks we received 30-40 cards each day. We read every one and saved them all to sometimes read AGAIN. The first day that no cards came was devastating because we wondered if that meant we should be “getting over it”. But over the next weeks and months another card would come here and there, and these were so special. They acknowledged that we must still be hurting and expressed care and concern. They said “we’re still praying for you”. They recognized that although life seemed back to normal, it really wasn’t, and won’t be for a long time. (No this is NOT an appeal for cards from all of you – it’s just sharing what I learned...)

People really do appreciate the food and supplies. The events of those days are mostly a blur, but I know we had a steady stream of people who brought food and paper products so we wouldn’t have to worry about cooking or dishes, bottled water, coffee – one person even brought breath freshening chewing gum! She said “you’re going to be talking to a lot of people over the next few days and might need this.”

Don’t be afraid to say something to the family members. This was an area I always dreaded – fearful I would say the wrong thing or be insensitive, but we treasure the little “Jon” stories that were shared. So many people came up to us at the services with tears in their eyes and said in anguish "I don't know what to say!" I just hugged them and said "There are no words. We can see what's in your heart".

Even the worst situations can result in GOOD. A few weeks ago we ran into one of Jon’s friends. She is a single mom working as a waitress. She told us that what happened to Jon caused her to evaluate her own life, and she wanted us to know that because of this she had gone back to school to learn skills that would allow her to provide a better life for herself and her child!

Throughout this difficult time we have experienced love in action - from people who cared enough to pray for us, send a card, bring us meals and supplies, or attend the services. We will never forget these kindnesses, and it has taught US how to respond in the future.



BURNS APPOINTED TO SECOND TERM ON NATIONAL PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

(UND SMHS News, September 28, 2007)

GRAND FORKS, N.D. -- Dr. Elizabeth Burns, professor of family and community medicine at the University of North Dakota (UND) School of Medicine and Health Sciences, has been appointed to a second term on the national commission which accredits physician assistant programs throughout the United States.

In January, she begins a three-year term on the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA), and has been elected secretary for the ARC-PA, a position on the executive committee. She was nominated by the American Medical Association to serve on the ARC-PA.

Burns is medical director of UND's physician assistant program through which students earn the Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree. The program, directed by Mary Ann Laxen, is offered through the medical school's Department of Family and Community Medicine.

The 17 members of the ARC-PA represent various medical and health care professional organizations. Their role is to support and advance physician assistant education by active participation in the work of the ARC-PA, including serving on committees and program site visit teams.

Burns, who joined the UND medical school in 2002, is director of the National Center of Excellence in Women's Health Region VIII Demonstration Project.

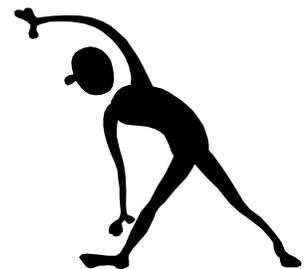
Benefits of Exercise

Exercise is regarded as a primary component in the management of pre-diabetes, as well as for diabetes.

Long term studies demonstrate a sustained improvement in blood glucose control while a regular exercise program is maintained.

Here are some of the known benefits of exercise:

- Reduction in plasma glucose.
- Improved functioning of the cardiovascular system.
- Improved strength and endurance.
- Reduction in cholesterol, LDL and triglycerides.
- Increase in HDL.
- Increased insulin sensitivity.
- Improved quality of life and self esteem, and reduced psychological stress.



Health Literacy

The AAPA has started a campaign to raise awareness about health literacy and its impact on the delivery of quality medical care. Health literacy is a person's ability to obtain, process and understand basic health information, additionally the ability to understand and make appropriate health decisions. According to the American Medical Association, poor health literacy is a "strong predictor of a person's health, than age, income, employment status, education level and race."

Health literacy is recognized as an essential skill not only for managing disease, but also preventing disease onset and ensuring access to quality medical care. Low health literacy is linked to higher rates of hospitalization, and higher use of emergency services.

Inadequate health literacy has been linked to higher incidence of uncontrolled diabetes, hypertension, coronary disease and asthma, and a higher incidence of cancer. Individuals with low health literacy have an impaired ability to care for chronic disease.

The focus for 2007=2008 is health literacy for the elementary aged child. On October 7th, NDAPA sponsored a book fair and education event for children at Barnes and Noble Booksellers in Fargo. We presented health related topics to children and their families. Presentations included first aid, proper hand washing, skin care, physical fitness, nutrition, how your heart works and how to control the spread of germs. We also read to the children between presentations.

The PA's who helped put together this event did a spectacular job. A BIG THANK YOU to the PA's that helped! Proceeds from this event were donated to S.E. Rienertson Elementary and Ellen Hopkins Elementary schools.

I also applied for a grant through the AAPA for books to donate to a classroom of developmentally challenged students. 2 Books – "Don't be a Couch Potato" and "I don't like to be Sick" were donated to the classroom on behalf of the NDAPA.

Health literacy has an impact on all age groups, let's do what we can individually to promote health literacy!!

Heidi Olson-Fitzgerald

Public Relations



NDAPA Board wishes you
a wonderful Holiday Season and
a Happy and Healthy New Year!

PA of the Year – Who would you nominate??

Annually, the North Dakota Academy of Physician Assistants (NDAPA) awards the distinction of North Dakota Physician Assistant of the Year. The NDAPA would like you to consider nominating a PA of your choice for NDAPA of the Year. The categories to consider are Educator, Humanitarian, and Overall Outstanding PA.

Nominations must be a PA working or living in North Dakota.

This may be a PA that you respect and admiration, work with closely or refer to professionally or some you know that does above and beyond the normal PA role.

If you know a PA who you would recommend as a candidate, please complete the nomination form and return it to:

Terri Lang, Executive Secretary
NDAPA
1412 Cottonwood Avenue
Minot, ND 58701
Phone: 701.838.6394
Fax: 701.839.0967

Deadline for nominations: **March 1, 2008**

The nominations are reviewed by the Awards Committee, and selection is made by this committee. The award will be presented at the NDAPA Spring conference in Fargo in May.
NDAPA Public Relations and Awards Committee.

Mark Your Calendars!

NDAPA Primary Care Seminar

May 1-2, 2008

Holiday Inn

Fargo, ND



--Nomination Form--
Physician Assistant of the Year Awards 2007
Sponsored by:
North Dakota Academy of Physician Assistants

I nominate the following individual for PA of the Year:

Nominee Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Telephone –(work or home)

Nominated For:

- Outstanding PA of the Year
- Humanitarian PA of the Year
- PA Educator of the Year

Nominator Name

Date

Nominator Address

City/State/Zip

Telephone – (work or home)

Please include a letter of recommendation, indicating your reasons for nomination.

The deadline for nominations is **March 1, 2008**.

No nominations will be accepted after that date.

Awards will be presented May, 2008 at the NDAPA Conference.

Guidelines:

Nominees do not have to be NDAPA members. The PA of the Year nominee may be a PA who works or resides in North Dakota.

Category descriptions:

Educator: This category is not limited to the academic setting. It is equally applicable to the PA educating the public on health-related issues or the PA profession.

Humanitarian: This category is for the PA whom you feel is giving of himself or herself in the service of others.

Outstanding: This category is for the PA who provides excellent care and service not only to their patients but also to the community and to the profession.



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The mission of NDAPA is to promote quality, cost-effective, accessible health care to enhance the health and well-being of the people of North Dakota and to promote the professional and personal development of Physician Assistants.

