

NEXUS

A Publication of Physician Assistants
for Global Health, Summer 2023



The President's Message

Hi Members!

It has been a while since PAGH has released a newsletter. Although this is the first for 2023, we have been working hard on the backend! This year was eventful, most recently packed with many conferences. In February 2023 PAGH hosted its annual conference in Dallas, TX. In addition, PAGH board members attended both the annual AAPA conference in Nashville and international GACOPA (Global Association of Clinical Officers and Physician Associates) conference in Malaysia. Please see the rest of the issue for all details regarding these incredible events.

- Lyndsey Milcarek, PA-C, MPH

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Physician Assistants for Global Health

PAGH 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

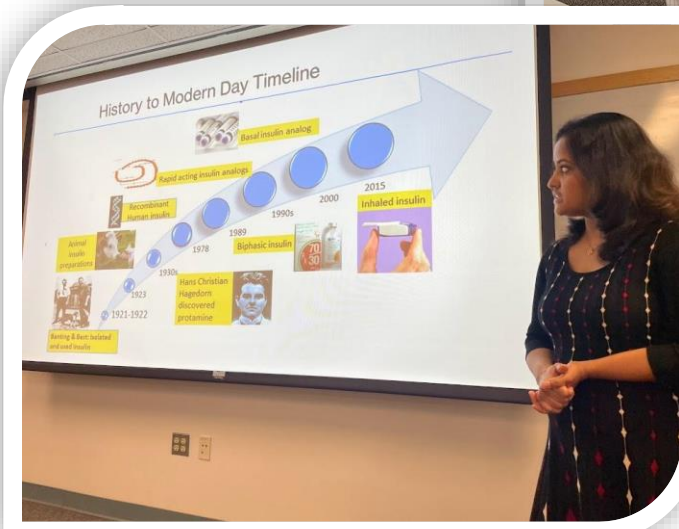
UTSW, Dallas, Tx - From March 23-24, 2023, members of PAGH from around the world gathered at UT Southwestern to learn and discuss a similar passion – Global Health. Attendees included healthcare professionals from all stages of their careers, from pre-PA students through licensed Advanced Care practitioners and physicians.

Dr. Patricio M. Polanco, an expert in minimally invasive and robotic pancreas and liver surgery, gave an engaging lecture outlining his journey through the medical field, beginning in medical school in Peru as a young man of 16. The twists and turns of his story brought listeners to Peru, Colombia, Philadelphia, and ultimately, Dallas. His expertise in both surgical oncology and global health was extensive and we all learn a great deal from this talk.

Attendees were also fortunate enough to hear about the adventures of Joanna Nichols, PA-C, who was previously employed by the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation in Rota, an island in the Northern Mariana Islands known as the “Friendly Island.” As an internal medicine and urgent care PA prior to this position, she became a “jack-of-all-trades” abroad and surprised even herself with her skills. The conference was packed full of lectures as inspiring and thought-provoking as these, including one by Mary Showstark, PA-C, about consulting with the World Health Organization about the PA profession. For access for these great lectures and more, you can become a member of PAGH and not only access prior conference lectures, but also an exclusive global health database, CME accredited webinar materials, and a network of healthcare professionals passionate about global health.

In addition to the immense amount of passion, knowledge, and resources shared at the conference, there was also plenty of fun! The first day of the conference was followed by a social hour, where food and drinks were shared, and new friendships were formed. PAGH is proud to have such an incredible network of passionate, talented humans who devote their time to making this world a better place. We hope to see you next year!

“A very insightful and well-organized conference. I look forward to a future conference and also hope to keep in touch with the PA's I was honored to meet.”



“I really enjoyed this conference! It was very inspiring to hear how many ways there are to be involved and the experiences of PAs/doctors involved in medical mission trips.”

AAPA Conference

Summary

It was another busy year at the AAPA for PAGH. We represented ourselves in the Exhibit Hall, expanding on networking opportunities which help to build our database for members like you. We love having the opportunity to speak to new potential partners, brainstorming PA's and curious students. Our board firmly believes we all work better together, so all of these experiences are valuable to our team.

We were grateful to host Scott Smalley, PA-C, who spoke about his research on the PA profession from 10 countries in Africa. We received feedback from participants that the topic was of high interest and had over 70 attendees in a small room in the Omni Nashville Hotel. We hope to get a larger space at the AAPA conference in the future to host all interested attendees.

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PA Student Global Updates...

A group of students from the UTSW Physician Assistant Program embarked on an impactful Spring Break Medical mission trip to El Paso, Texas from March 25th to 31st, 2023. Led by Stan Kwan, the Southwestern Christian Fellowship has been organizing these trips for over 35 years, bringing together medical students, PA students, residents, and attending MDs and PAs. Collaborating with local churches, they operate free clinics, providing whole-person care and conducting histories and physicals in both English and Spanish. Every day they traveled to different clinic sites around El Paso and saw patients all day long. Students present their findings to attendings, working together to develop treatment plans. This immersive experience not only enhances clinical skills and cultural competence but also fosters interprofessional collaboration, resilience, and resourcefulness. Students develop empathy and compassion for underserved populations, igniting a strong dedication to serving vulnerable communities.

Syerra Harris from the UTSW PA Class of 2024, who is one of the Global Health Co-Chairs of her class, shared her reflections on the trip: “The trip to El Paso was such a great experience for me. Being able to apply the medical knowledge that I accumulated over a couple of semesters was the best learning experience I could have. The food was incredible. The host church was amazing and welcomed us with open arms. I think the best part was learning about the practicality of medicine and what is actually used in practice because in school, we learn that everything is important. So getting to the practical, real-life stuff was really interesting.”

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Caroline Areingdale, another student from the UTSW PA Class of 2024, expressed her enthusiasm for the trip: "El Paso was such a great trip serving the people of Texas who don't have access to medical providers or no way to pay for it! My favorite part was getting to practice physical exam skills and presenting to the providers. Overall, this trip was a great learning experience, and I can't wait to go back!"

Jared Greer, another student from UTSW PA Class of 2024, expressed words from his experience... "It was amazing to see how grateful all the communities were to have us around and how appreciative they were to be receiving our care. Many of the patients we saw do not have insurance and have been living without treatment for chronic conditions for many years, which was heartbreaking. But I was extremely moved by the kindness we received from the locals and the support that they have for each other within their communities. It was truly inspiring to see how resourceful they are and how appreciative they are for even the slightest things. I could go on for hours talking about how this trip touched me and softened my heart. It was truly a trip that I will never forget and one that I will carry with me throughout my career to remind me of what being a provider of healthcare is really all about."

This transformative experience has deepened their understanding of healthcare and instilled a desire to continue making a difference in the lives of others.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN

PLEASE SUBMIT BY 8/25/23

2023 PAGH Student Scholarship Information

General Requirements

- Current PAGH member
- Applicants must be enrolled in an accredited Physician Assistant program (and/or professional equivalent organization)
- Applicants must send a letter from their university stating the applicant is in good standing with their academic institution
- Applicants must submit a written essay, minimum 500 words, addressing essay question listed below on application. Please read the recommended guidelines regarding content to be included in the essay.
- Applicant cannot be a current PAGH board member or other employee, or PAGH volunteer involved with financial decision making
- Recipients must sign a written agreement stating that the amount of the scholarship is not otherwise provided by the applicant's program or other donors; that they are in fact in financial need of the scholarship amount; and that any PAGH funds received will be used solely to fund the cost of the trip, clinical rotation, or research.
- Recipient of the scholarship will also be asked to write an article to be submitted to the PAGH newsletter – scholarship candidates are also encouraged to contribute

Directions for Submission of Application for Scholarship

- Please email this completed application to: pasforglobalhealth@gmail.com, placing in the subject line: **2023 Student Scholarship Application: Your Name**
- Letters from your university need to be emailed to the same email address, placing in the subject line: **2023 Student Scholarship Letter of Good Standing: Your Name**
- All portions of application are due no later than 11:59pm PST on Friday, August 25th 2023
- Questions regarding this scholarship or application can be directed to the PAGH email (pasforglobalhealth@gmail.com)

2023 PAGH Student Scholarship Application

Candidate Name:

Contact Information:

Address:

Cell Phone:

Email:

Questions

1. What PA program do you attend?
2. What year are you? Expected graduation date?
3. Where is your international/ rotation or what is your research topic?
4. Is the work organized through your school? If not with which organization, will you be traveling (if applicable)? Please provide us with contact person who can verify your participation.
5. What patient population will you be working with and/or researching?
6. Dates of rotation (if applicable):
7. Estimated cost to you:
8. **Required Essay** (500 word minimum, 1500 word maximum):

Please describe why this clinical rotation or research topic is an important component of your training to become a physician assistant as well as what impact it will have on your future career as a physician assistant.

**** We advise that you touch on subjects relevant to the PA profession during your essay, such as international PA work, advancement of the PA profession, working with underserved populations as a PA, educational objectives for going on an international rotation, your future career goals and your desire to work with underserved populations.**

2023 PAGH Fellow Scholarship Information

General Requirements

- Current PAGH member
- Completed an accredited Physician Assistant Program (or professional equivalent program)
- Show some proof of PA certification (will accept a letter of employment from current job, NCCPA certification letter, or copy of state PA license)
- Applicants must submit a written essay, minimum 500 words, addressing essay question listed below on application. Please read the recommended guidelines regarding content to be included in the essay.
- Applicant cannot be a currently PAGH board member or volunteer involved with financial decision making
- Recipients must sign a written agreement stating that they are not fully funded by another donor for this trip and that any PAGH funds received will be used solely to fund the cost of the trip or rotation
- Recipient of the scholarship will also be asked to write an article to be submitted to the PAGH NEXUS newsletter – scholarship candidates are also encouraged to contribute

Directions for Submission of Application for Scholarship

- Please email this completed application to: pasforglobalhealth@gmail.com, placing in the subject line: **2023 Fellow Scholarship Application: Your Name**
- All portions of application are due no later than 11:59pm PST on Friday, August 25th 2023
- Questions regarding this scholarship or application can be directed to the PAGH email (pasforglobalhealth@gmail.com)

2023 PAGH Fellow Scholarship Application

Candidate Name:

Contact Information:

Address:

Cell Phone:

Email:

Questions

1. What PA program did you attend?
2. What year did you graduate from PA school?
3. Where is your upcoming medical trip or the reason you are applying for scholarship?
4. If you are traveling abroad, performing covid relief work, applying for education purposes or working with underserved populations, please provide us with the appropriate information, including organization name and contact person who can verify your participation/ job information.
5. What patient population will you be working with?
6. What are the most common health ailments the community faces (if applicable) ?
7. Dates of trip (if applicable):
8. Estimated cost to you:
9. **Required Essay** (500 word minimum, 1,500 word maximum):

Please outline the overall purpose of your work and how it aligns with the mission of physician assistants for global health in either the domestic or international arena.

**** We advise that you touch on subjects relevant to the PA profession during your essay, such as international PA work, advancement of the PA profession, working with underserved populations as a PA, educational objectives, your future career goals and your desire to work with underserved populations.**

GACOPA Conference Recap

The 3rd annual GACOPA conference was held in June 2023 in Putrajaya, Malaysia. Our board member, Mary Showstark, was in attendance and had very positive feedback to share. The theme of the conference was Harmonizing Clinical Officers and Physician Associates Towards Attaining Universal Health Coverage. Overall, there was collaboration on educational curriculum mapping and development of curriculum frameworks and establishment of common nomenclature for multi-professionals. In addition, the ministry of health was in attendance and supportive of all GACOPA efforts.





www.telehelpukraine.com
info@telehelpukraine.com

To: Healthcare Provider

We are writing to you today to share a volunteer opportunity to support Ukrainian communities near the front lines remotely through a non-profit organization TeleHelp Ukraine.

Project goals: provide telemedicine support to **mobile clinics** in regions close to the front lines of the Russian war in Ukraine.

Our target patient population are civilians who live in villages in Donbas and other regions close to the front lines. These are often elderly or persons with disabilities and their caregivers, or other groups who for various reasons are unable to evacuate. There is very limited to no connection where they are, road conditions are bad and unsafe, so many of these communities have not had access to even primary care for over a year. Volunteer organizations that work in this area are generally able to deliver medications, food and basic necessities, as well as transport those in critical conditions to hospitals in larger cities. However, these teams are run by war medics, nurses, emergency technicians, and do not currently have physicians traveling with them. Our goal is to connect these patients to TeleHelp Ukraine physicians with help of our local partner, [Base UA](#). They are already working in the Donbas region, and will be able to locate patients in need of assistance, conduct triage and collect vital signs, set up video-visits with TeleHelp Ukraine providers, and coordinate medication distribution follow-up care. We have run several of such virtual clinics in our pilot phase, and are now **recruiting additional physicians to expand our reach**.

To sign-up, please fill out [this form](#) [here](#).

Once the volunteer form is filled out, there will be a short onboarding process. If you're interested but are unable to volunteer at this time, please consider joining our monthly [mailing list](#) to stay informed about our organization. Please see the link to our general FAQ sheet [here](#) and disclosures and legal considerations [here](#) for additional information.



Base UA team setting up internet in a village in Donbas



Virtual visit with TeleHelp Ukraine provider



Base UA team working with a patient



Additional details

Who are TeleHelp Ukraine?

[TeleHelp Ukraine](#) is a community of 100+ **clinicians**, who offer free medical and mental health support to Ukrainians affected by the war through telemedicine, as well as **volunteers** and **interpreters**, who coordinate delivery of these services. We have successfully completed **1000+ telehealth visits** over the last year, and are now expanding to support patients living in hard-to-reach areas near the front lines of the war.

Who are our on-the-ground partners?

Our key local partner in [BaseUA](#), a Ukrainian non-profit operating in Donbas region, who, in addition to running mobile clinics, work on civilian evacuations, deliver humanitarian aid and medical supplies to remote areas, train the local population to handle medical emergencies, and a myriad of other projects.

Project logistics

- Clinic hours. The times mobile clinics will be run are defined mainly by the logistics of the on-the-ground team, particularly their travel times and safety. At this time, they need physician support during the 10am-4pm KYIV time, which we are roughly breaking down into 2 shifts.

- Scheduling. For the next few weeks we aim to run the clinic a couple times a week, 2 shifts each day, up to 3 providers each shift. We aim to have the schedule set about a week ahead of the clinic.

- Clinic day: provider view. On the day of your clinic, we will ask you to log into our telemedicine platform, where you will start seeing appointments added to your schedule from a few hours to minutes prior to clinic start. When you click on the appointment, you will see patient information, as well as a zoom link to go to. At the appointment start time, you will go to that zoom link to meet the patient. An interpreter may be with the patient physically, or also virtually (if you need an interpreter). After you finish with the appointment, you will write a treatment note in our telemedicine platform, so that on-the-ground team can follow-up on it.

- Local resources. We aim to provide you with context on what medications and resources are available for the patient and the on-the-ground team as soon as we have it. Generally speaking, the mobile clinic will bring some medications with them, and others they may need to retrieve and bring back to the patient.

- Communication. The night before the clinic day, we will invite you to a Signal chat with all the providers working that day, interpreters, and coordinators. This will be used to give clinic day updates. The on-the-ground team has very inconsistent connection, especially while they travel to the village, so we may not be able to reach them until they arrive at their destination and set up the Starlink. Based on our previous clinics, they may encounter a variety of unpredictable circumstances on the road, which can cause the clinic to be delayed for up to 1 hour or be cancelled. They strive to provide us with timely updates as much as they can, but we want to still fully inform you of the possibilities, and we highly appreciate your flexibility.

- Commitment. We understand that the clinic hours with the time differences can make it hard for many providers to participate without sacrificing your work-life balance. Any time you have to donate to us is highly valued and appreciated, and we can make it work with as little as a couple hours on a monthly or one-off basis.

Yale PA Online



PAGH



VIRTUAL SPEAKER

- 30 years of humanitarian relief and long-term development in the health sector in Palestine
- Worldwide organization with a medical advisory board of nearly 200 volunteer specialists
- Main organization in the world sending medical missions to the Middle East
- Provide surgery and training to local hospitals
- Steve's wife, Dr. Zeena Salman, is a pediatric oncologist with St. Jude's Hospital



REGISTER NOW



Steve Sosebee

PRESIDENT OF PALESTINE CHILDREN'S RELIEF FUND

MONDAY, AUGUST 7

8:30 P.M. EST

[HTTPS://US06WEB.ZOOM.US/MEETIN
G/REGISTER/TZAPFUGVQD0TH91HRRF
0WS9VKH_EGKPX0QXW](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81111111111?pwd=OWS9VkhfEGkxOQXW)