



T A P A
 TENNESSEE ACADEMY OF
 PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

PA Pulse

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From the President

Happy New Year! It is that time of year again when we focus on new beginnings and goals we want to accomplish in the new year. It is also a time of year when we think back on how much we accomplished in the previous year.

2024 was a big year for PAs in Tennessee. We were successful in achieving a much needed update to our practice act that decreases restrictions on PAs with 6000 hours of clinical experience, and we successfully joined the national PA Licensing Compact. I would like to give a few updates on both of these legislative wins and also point out that these accomplishments could not have happened without the support of PAs like you!

The legislation that allows Tennessee PAs to have an endorsement on their license if they have 6000 hours of clinical practice is currently having the details worked out by the taskforce and Tennessee Board of PAs. The taskforce is made up of three members from the PA licensing board, one member from the allopathic physician board, one member from the osteopathic physician board, and one member from the podiatric physician board. We have already had one successful taskforce meeting and our next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 31st. We hope to have these collaboration agreement rules adopted soon so that the entirety of the bill will then be active. Please stay tuned to TAPA announcements for notifications of when that happens.

The PA licensing compact creation is in full swing as well. As the elected member that represents Tennessee on the compact, I now have full voting authority during the meetings. This is very important because I am currently only one of two PAs on the compact commission as other states have opted to send lawyers or administrative staff as their state representatives.

It is vitally important to me that PAs are well represented during the creation of the compact so that our profession is moving forward with its implementation. But as it stands now, PA voices that have voting authority are vastly outnumbered. While several of the lawyers and administrative staff chosen by their states have meaningful experience working on other professional licensing compacts (namely the allopathic physician one), in my opinion, it is still important for PAs to have a strong voice in the creation of such a huge addition to our profession.

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Mission - TAPA's mission is to promote accessible, quality healthcare, and to advance the education, profession and practice of physician assistants in Tennessee.

Vision

Protecting and empowering the practice of physician assistants in Tennessee.

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Hopefully, as more states sign on to the compact, more PAs will be selected to represent their state. Currently there is one PA from Virginia that was voted onto the compact Executive Committee, and I serve on the Rules Committee and the Communications Committee.

We have had one in-person meeting as an entire group, and the rules committee has had two virtual meetings. We have an in-person meeting scheduled for Jan. 29, and this will be the first meeting where I will be a voting member so I plan to attend in person.

TAPA continues to work tirelessly to push the profession forward in 2025. While we do not have any TAPA sponsored legislation this year, we will be watching closely to make sure there are no bills that are put forward by any other entities that could be detrimental to our profession. Regardless of whether we have our own legislation, TAPA is still planning a strong "PA Day on the Hill" on Feb. 19.

Last year, we had one of the best PA Hill Days in the entire country, with almost 300 people in attendance and more than 100 meetings scheduled. We also had tremendous positive media coverage, so it was a big day for PAs

SAVE THE DATES

TAPA has some exciting events planned for 2025! Be sure to mark these dates on your calendar and plan to attend.

PA Day on the Hill

Feb. 19, 2025
Tennessee State Capitol
Nashville, Tenn.

Spring Fling

April 25-26, 2025
Virtual Conference

FallFest

Oct. 6-10, 2025
Gatlinburg Convention Center
Gatlinburg, Tenn.

across the state. It is just as important to have a strong Hill Day on years when we don't have legislation so that we can continue to advocate for our profession by having discussions with legislators. The more they see us, the more they understand who we are and how valuable we are to healthcare.

We would love to see everyone on Feb. 19 this year. I love PA Day on the Hill because I get to see my PA friends from across the state, and I get to talk about the profession with community PAs and PA students all together. It is a great way to come together and share our passion for the profession.

We cannot continue our growth in this state without the support of PAs like you, so put it on your calendar and plan to attend!

Marie Patterson
TAPA President, PA-C, DHSc

TAPA Awards Presentation at FallFest

By Katherine Pesut Moffat, TAPA Executive Director

At the annual Awards and Recognition Ceremony during FallFest, TAPA celebrated the best and the brightest within the profession. Below is an overview of those celebrated at the conference.

PA Student of the Year: Jaydan Hull, PA-S and Allie Nakoff, PA-S

This year, there was a tie in the PA Student of the Year judging, so the committee decided to recognize both of these outstanding students.

Jaydan Hull is a student at Milligan University. She has worked very hard to have the opportunity to train as a PA. Prior to entering PA school, she worked as a certified nursing assistant to gain healthcare experience for her PA program application. She has demonstrated her passion for serving those in need by volunteering with Remote Area Medical clinics, Project CURE, Kids Against Hunger, and Coalition for Kids. She

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also recently served on a short-term medical mission trip to Ecuador with several other Milligan PA students and faculty members.

Jaydan has participated in many roles and activities to further the image of the PA profession. She serves as the Treasurer on the PA Student Government Association, and prior to enrolling in this program, she served as the President of the East Tennessee State University PA Student Organization (PASO).

The second PA student of the Year recipient is Allie Nakoff. Allie is also a student at Milligan University. She is described as having a strong work ethic, excellent character, outstanding leadership abilities, and a determined perseverance.

Prior to entering PA school, Allie worked as a pharmacy technician in the medically underserved area of Elizabethton, Tenn. where she developed a passion for serving underserved populations. This pharmacy was very busy and required outstanding teamwork, and Allie demonstrated both teamwork and leadership abilities during the time she worked there. She eventually became

one of the lead pharmacy techs and participated in training newer techs for the pharmacy.

Allie has participated in numerous community service opportunities through her church and other organizations such as Appalachian Christian Camp, CMF Globalscope, and Kids Against Hunger. She also served on the short-term medical mission trip to Ecuador with several other Milligan PA students and faculty members.

Educator of the Year - Jennifer Rayburn, MD

Dr. Jennifer Rayburn was nominated for TAPA's Educator of the Year award by the entire MTSU PA Class of 2025. They say that she has been an exceptional professor and mentor throughout their time at Middle Tennessee State University.

Dr. Rayburn completed her residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Tennessee, and she has practiced internal medicine in the Middle Tennessee area for the past ten years, where she also served in her clinic on various committees.

Her students say that her ability to translate complex concepts into understandable and relatable terms has significantly enhanced our learning experience. They go on to add that her

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From left, scholarship recipients Roberta Enisor and Tuyet-Ngan Nguyen, PA Students of the Year Jaydan Hull and Allie Nakoff, Educator of the Year Jennifer Rayburn, Preceptor of the Year Ryan Bader, and TAPA President Marie Patterson.

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expertise has shaped the cohort's ability to take on complex case studies and apply the skills learned during their didactic year.

Her students shared that one of the most memorable moments in their journey was the extravagant party Dr. Rayburn organized for their cohort on the day they learned their clinical placements. Her thoughtful gesture was not only a celebration of their achievements, but also a testament to her genuine care and support for her students. The party was a perfect blend of festivity and encouragement, reflecting her deep commitment to her students' personal and professional growth. It was a moment that they will cherish forever.

Preceptor of the Year – Ryan Bader, PA-C

Ryan Bader practices at Blue Ridge Family Medicine in Johnson City, where he has worked since graduating from the Milligan University PA Program in 2020. He has served as a preceptor for numerous Milligan University PA Program students over the past three years.

Prior to changing careers and attending the PA program at Milligan, Ryan served as a youth and worship minister for 16 years. Ryan has been very active in his community and has served with many community service organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Family Promise, Johnson City American Little League, Appalachian Christian Camp, and Grandview Christian Church, and he has led several short-term international mission trips to Puebla and Piedras Negras, Mexico.

Ryan has supported the PA profession and the Milligan University PA program in various ways. He is a member of the Milligan University PA Program Advisory Committee and he serves as an OSCE evaluator for Milligan's Patient Assessment, Counseling, and Education course.

He has served as a preceptor for numerous students for each clinical year cohort where he provides an excellent family medicine rotation that includes hands-on experience along with personalized instruction.



From left: Seth Weathersby, PA of the Year Javier Rodriguez, TAPA President Marie Patterson.

PA of the Year – Javier Rodriguez, PA-C

Javier Rodriguez, PA-C is finishing his 22nd year in practice, with an incredible tenure of 19 years in the emergency department at St Thomas Midtown Hospital in metro Nashville. He has been awarded with the title of Senior PA for his leadership, work ethic, and clinical expertise.

As an outstanding practicing clinician, Javier is never satisfied with his current level of knowledge and consistently works to better himself. Striving to be the most competent professional, he spends countless hours practicing and mastering the slit lamp, any wound closure despite its depth and level of complexity, fracture and dislocation reductions, many complex and challenging medical problems, and virtually any other problem that he may face during a normal shift in the emergency room.

One of the strongest attributes that Javier possesses is compassion and ability to communicate with patients and family in the most difficult of circumstances. Javier can establish immediate rapport with a family in the most trying times and can facilitate open lines of conversation so that the patient's best interest and wishes are understood by all.

Being fluently bilingual, Javier has served on a semi-regular basis as a part time faculty member for the PA Program at Trevecca Nazarene University for medical Spanish. He is the embodiment of the AAPA slogan "PAs Can Do That", and we are pleased to recognize him as TAPA's 2024 PA of the Year.

2024 TAPA Hall of Fame Inductee

This year, the TAPA Board of Directors is pleased to name Megan Burrows to the TAPA Hall of Fame. Megan passed away suddenly in 2023, and TAPA leadership wishes to recognize Megan's many contributions to TAPA through this posthumous honor.



Megan Burrows, PA-C

TAPA's Hall of Fame recognizes PAs who demonstrate a career commitment to TAPA and the PA profession through participation on the Board of Directors, Committee Chairmanships, extraordinary volunteerism and/or remarkable support of TAPA activities. Megan was an extraordinary regional director, energizing the Chattanooga Region through frequent dinner meetings and social gathers.

Megan could always be counted on to actively participate in Board meetings and lend a hand at TAPA events, particularly the CME conferences. She also took over TAPA's social media channels and did a fantastic job highlighting TAPA leadership and promoting upcoming TAPA conferences.

The Hall of Fame also recognizes distinction in medical practice, medical education, research, publications, precepting activities, or healthcare management. Megan was a role model in her work in developmental behavioral pediatrics at Siskin Children's Institute, demonstrating excellence in PA practice and opening opportunities for future PAs in this field.

Megan made a lasting impact on the PA profession in our state, and she is greatly missed.

Tennessee PA Foundation Report

*Frank Warren, Foundation Secretary/
Treasurer and Sarah Murawski, Foundation
President*

As we come to the end of 2024, we would like to thank everyone who made donations to the PA Foundation this year. Your contributions enabled the Foundation to award \$9,250 in scholarships during Fallfest in Gatlinburg in October. This was the largest dollar amount of scholarships awarded in a single year that the Foundation has ever awarded, so thank you to our generous donors!!

The recipients of your kind and generous giving were PA students from multiple programs in our state, and they were awarded scholarships under three different scholarship titles.

The first recipient was Shelby Howell of the Milligan University PA Program who won the prestigious James Montag, Jr. Military Service Scholarship in the amount of \$2,000 for her previous/current military service in the Army Reserve and other outstanding achievements.

The next scholarships given were the Linda Presley Memorial Scholarships in honor of Mrs. Linda Presley, having provided a loving and comfortable home away from home for many PA students on rotation. Provided by Johnny Presley for the second year, the recipients this year were Erin Marks and Elizabeth Elmore of the South College PA Program, each receiving a \$1,000 Scholarship.

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Bethel University PA Students celebrate their team's win at the 2024 TAPA Student Challenge Bowl. Team members were Jay Foster, Jeremy Lamonte, Jo Grimes, and alternate Sergey Kletsov. Congratulations!

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The remaining recipients were awarded with JC Carey Memorial Scholarships in honor of a greatly loved PA who not only served his patients well over his life and career, but also mentored PA students on rotations, taught at Bethel University, and was a member of TAPA throughout his career. JC also served on the TAPA Board of Directors and helped our profession accomplish many legislative victories in its infancy here in Tennessee.

The JC Carey Scholarship awardees were Emily O'Neill of the Middle Tennessee State University PA Program (\$750); Audrey O'Neill also of Middle Tennessee State University (\$750); Ryan Burgess of the LMU-Harrogate PA Program (\$750); Tuyet-Ngan Nguyen attending the Bethel University PA Program (\$1,000); Roberta Enisor also in the Bethel University PA Program (\$1,000); and Brian Burgess of the LMU-Harrogate PA Program (\$1,000).

Congratulations again to each of our scholarship recipients who were chosen by the TAPA Board of Directors and PA Foundation based on their applications describing their past achievements, volunteerism, current and past academic accomplishments, and an essay on what motivated them to want to become PAs. Their future aspirations, goals and financial needs were also considered in their application process and evaluation.

Once again, we had more deserving applicants than funding to provide assistance to everyone who applied for a scholarship. We encourage everyone to make a donation of any amount to the PA Foundation to fund scholarships to help future PAs achieve their goals.

The Foundation is a 501(c)3 IRS charitable organization and you may be able to claim your donation(s) as a tax deduction. Your one-time gift or recurring monthly donation can be set up by contacting the TAPA office at 615-463-0026, or you can mail your donation to the Tennessee PA Foundation, c/o TAPA, PO Box 150785, Nashville, Tennessee 37215.

Thank you again on behalf of the Tennessee PA Foundation. Best wishes for a happy, healthy and blessed 2025!

2024 TAPA PAC Contributors

(Received Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2024)

If you haven't yet contributed to the PAC this year, please visit www.tnopa.com/political-action-

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