

VOL. 42  
NO. 1  
JUNE 2022

*Your Voice. Your Profession.*

# MICHIGAN PA

MICHIGAN ACADEMY  
of PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS



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## MAPA PRIORITY SURVEY

In spring, we asked over 7,800 PAs how MAPA should prioritize its resources. This is what you told us.

### 1. Reimbursement Issues were a top priority (level 1 or 2) for 76% of respondents.

Michigan payers, like Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) and Priority Health, for example, each have unique credentialing and reimbursement policies. PAs are often disadvantaged by these policies. MAPA is the driving force behind updating Michigan PA reimbursement policies. For example, MAPA representatives are meeting with the BCBS Medical Directors this summer to discuss reimbursement issues harming patients.

**ACTION:** MAPA is meeting with BCBS and other payers to enhance the reimbursement opportunities for high-quality PAs. As the best value in health care, value-based payments should be available to every PA. We need to understand your reimbursement challenges to develop a comprehensive Michigan PA reimbursement guide.

### 2. The Mental Health Code and how it affects the rapidly growing demand for PAs in psychiatry was a high priority for 51% of respondents.

MAPA developed Michigan Senate Bill 191 to add PAs under the definition of Mental Health Provider. In 2021, the bill passed the Senate unanimously with support from the Michigan Osteopathic Association, Family Physicians, Addiction Physicians and many other mental health organizations. And despite opposition from the Michigan State Medical Society, it is currently before the Health Policy Committee in the House of Representatives. Updating this law will acknowledge PAs' contributions as mental health providers and that every PA is trained in psychiatric medicine empowering employers to hire more PAs.

**ACTION:** Contact your State Representative, discuss your role practicing medicine in the community, and ask for their support. Also, thank your Senator.

### 3. Participating Physician Requirement was a big priority for 53% of respondents.

Michigan ranked #2 in the country for PA compensation in 2021. Since 1974, MAPA has been a driving force for the PA profession in Michigan. Michigan PAs practice in the best environment in the nation since achieving full practice authority in 2016.

Here are examples of our unique ability to provide the best care for our patients in Michigan:

- PAs can own a practice. There are no ratios that limit how many PAs work in a practice.
- PAs are independent prescribers eligible for a Michigan Controlled Substance License like physicians.
- There is no co-signature requirement on PA charts and no requirement for PAs to be supervised or delegated the practice of medicine.
- Patient outcomes are the PA's responsibility. Malpractice liability is limited or nonexistent for participating physicians if the physician has not been involved in the patient's care.

**ACTION:** Reduce the number of services provided by a PA but billed by or associated to a physician. The amount participating physicians are paid for by simply signing a basic agreement should be transparent to PAs. Communicate to employers that PAs are not supervised or delegated the practice of medicine.

### 4. Precepting PA Students was a Top Priority for 41% of respondents.

Michigan PA programs are struggling with a shortage of PA preceptors. PA jobs are projected to grow by 30% by 2030, according to the National Bureau of Labor Statistics. PA students compete with medical and NP students for clinical rotations. MAPA is working with the Michigan PA programs on strategies to engage and support PA preceptors.

**ACTION:** MAPA is working with the eleven Michigan PA programs to understand the current strategies and challenges to develop PA student precepting opportunities. Legislation supported by MAPA has been introduced to develop a Michigan tax credit up to \$5,000 for PA student preceptors.

### 5. Title Change from Assistant to Associate was a top priority for 21% of the respondents.

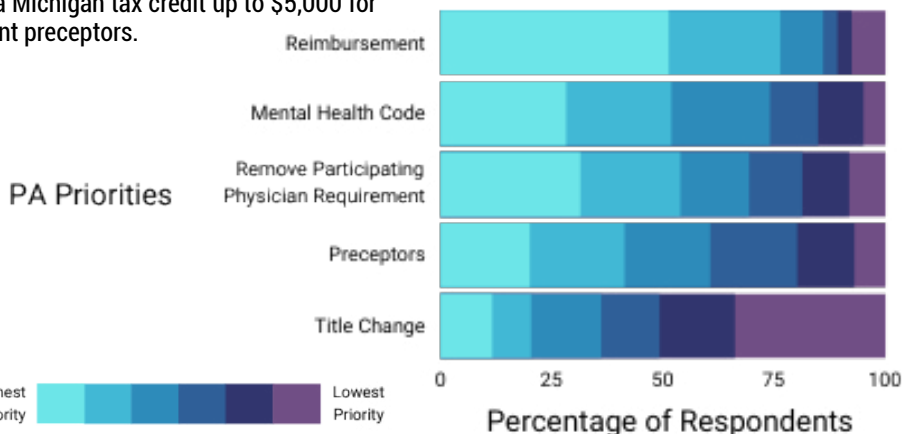
AAPA House of Delegates, including the 8 elected Michigan PA representatives, took the bold move in 2021 to change Physician Assistant to Physician Associate. The name change is estimated by AAPA to take 5 years and carry a significant cost for each state to implement. PAs cannot yet use Physician Associate which requires a change in Michigan law.

**ACTION:** MAPA surveyed Michigan PAs to understand the impact of the title Physician Assistant. Many PAs have replied that the term "assistant" is confusing to their patients leading them to lack trust or confidence in their care. Many PAs have replied that they perceive little or no benefit to changing the name. We have secured the legal name, Michigan Academy of Physician Associates.

### CONCLUSION

Every change in Michigan Law requires champions from the Michigan Senate and/or House. Political contributions are among the most impactful ways PAs can support legislators who support PAs. Of the approximately 7,000 practicing Michigan PAs, only about 17% are members of MAPA and only about 100 have contributed to the Political Action Committee (PAC) in the last five years. MAPA's PAC would be among the most powerful in the state if every Michigan PA contributed \$50 per year. Please consider joining MAPA today and contributing to the PAC so Michigan PAs can continue to support you.

Thank you to those PAs who participated in the survey.



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This past year has been unusual, unprecedented, eventful, and at times downright scary. As I prepare to transition to immediate past president, I want to thank every PA in the state of Michigan for allowing me to serve you and this great profession.

We have seen successes and challenges. MAPA developed a COVID safety plan to hold an in-person conference during a pandemic, and what a success it was! With safety protocols in place and testing available onsite, the turnout surpassed our expectations, reinforcing the incredible PA community we are all a part of.

MAPA will not let Michigan PAs be disadvantaged. We face struggles daily as we strive to maintain and advance our practice environment.

We are one of 12 states that have achieved the six key elements of a modern PA practice act. The PA profession is the only profession trained to practice medicine across multiple specialties. The hallmark of our great contribution to saving lives is our ability to rise to the occasion. Early in the pandemic, due to MAPA's advocacy efforts, an executive order was granted removing barriers to the practice of medicine for Michigan PAs. This state executive order waived the requirement for PAs to have a relationship with a physician to practice, highlighting not only the versatility of PAs, but also our desire to step up when needed...and we stepped up.

We continue to face challenges and work towards progress. Thanks to MAPA's advocacy efforts, Michigan PAs are not required to have a supervising physician and are independent prescribers. As of this year, we can now diagnose autism for children on Medicaid. We continue our efforts to add PAs to the mental health code. MAPA also recently met with Blue Cross Blue Shield to address reimbursement and policy issues. Our reimbursement committee was well prepared, and it showed, moving us closer to the change we seek. *Crain's Detroit* featured two articles highlighting PAs, "Physician Assistants Expand Roles as Laws Change, Acceptance Increases" and "Mental Health Code Changes that Add PAs to Designated List of Practitioners Could Ease Stressed System." With our dedicated team, we continue to make great strides.

It takes a collective effort to make an association like ours viable. I want to extend a sincere thank you to all the volunteer members and Association Acumen. The MAPA Board of Directors, Executive Committee and Committee Chairs devote a significant portion of their free time to every PA in this state. Thanks to our volunteers who have hosted membership drives, dinners and events, CME opportunities both in person and virtual, and of course, the yearly Capitol Summit in Lansing. Lastly, a special thank you to our Executive Director who endlessly advocates for PAs in the state of Michigan.

We will continue to face many obstacles. What is affecting PA practice? What challenges do practicing PAs experience? The Michigan PA top priorities survey is identifying what Michigan PAs need and want. We have received inspiring comments and suggestions, we need you to make change. Every idea needs a path. I ask you to consider what you, as a PA, want here in this state and then ask you to join the effort to achieve those goals. We all made it through PA school, nothing is out of our reach. No voice is too soft when that voice speaks for others.



Thank you for allowing me to serve this academy, it has been an honor and an experience that I will cherish. As I step down and hand over this role to our incoming President, I am humbled by the strength, the patience, and the passion that I have witnessed within MAPA over this last year. I look forward to seeing all of you at upcoming MAPA events.

**Michelle Petropoulos, DMSc, PA-C, DFAAPA**  
MAPA President



# FROM THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT



Many years ago, I was confronted by the nursing staff at a hospital where I worked because, after talking with the patient and her family, I wrote an order (yes this was before EMR) to change my patient's code status from 'full code' to 'DNR.' It is always a difficult discussion to have, perhaps because of the finality of it, but everyone agreed that this was the best way to proceed. The attending was informed and agreed, but while I was sitting at the nursing station, I was handed back the code status form that I had signed, and it was pointed out to me that underneath the line where I signed, it read 'Physician's Signature.' The nursing supervisor was called, and her response was, "It says physician signature and you're not a physician so you can't sign it!" Well, I actually had signed it, but the unit clerk wouldn't put it in the chart and the patient remained a full code until the physician was able to come in later and sign the form. Politics had interfered with patient care.

Trying to find a solution so this wouldn't happen again, I reached out to MAPA. Well, actually we didn't have an office back then, so I spoke with one of the PA leaders at that time, Jack Kircher. I explained the situation and was told that back in 1977, the Attorney General had reviewed the law and ruled that an order coming from a PA is the same as coming from a physician. Buoyed with a copy of that opinion, I went to the nursing department and handed over my newfound ruling, but to no avail, as I learned hospital policy can be more narrowly defined than the State law and the form still said, 'physician signature.' Undeterred, I went to the Chief Medical Officer who was supportive and then 18 months later, after meeting with layers and layers of hospital bureaucracy, another signature line was added to the form. With the best interest of the patient in mind, patience, persistence, and perseverance paid off.

Take a minute and look over the list of laws that we changed over the years, and many had to do with this same issue. Antiquated language included the term physician and not PA or APP and therefore some administrator, lawyer or society interprets the law to mean that a PA is not capable of providing some aspect of the practice of medicine for their patient. The changes in State law take much more time and expertise than my experience in a single hospital. Creating what is now Senate Bill 191, to include PAs into the Mental Health Code, started in 2016 and yes, we are undeterred.

What I have learned over the years of my involvement with developing and changing laws in Michigan, is that PAs will always be confronted with issues that will impact our ability to practice medicine, and that laws will not be changed by other organizations. Only through the support of PAs willing to keep MAPA viable through membership, and those willing to get their hands dirty and become involved, will things change.

Maintaining and improving PAs' practice environment is like a never-ending relay race. At some point, I was handed a baton and I ran with it. Looking ahead, it is good to see a few outstretched hands reaching back to take my baton and accept this challenge - many hands will lessen the burden. It has been an honor to serve my profession and my colleagues knowing the work that MAPA has done over the years has truly made a difference. It has improved the practice environment for all Michigan PAs and the care we provide for our patients. Member or not, we are all MAPA!



Ron Stavale, PA-C  
MAPA Immediate Past President

# FROM THE PRESIDENT-ELECT



I would like to wish everyone an amazing summer so far and am hopeful you are taking advantage of the warm weather. Now that the MAPA elections have come to a close, I'm excited to work with both new and familiar faces during my term as President starting on July 1. There are so many exciting things on the horizon as well as current issues to support. At this time of writing, the AAPA National Conference in Indianapolis is running full steam.

MAPA not only had delegates in the AAPA House of Delegates representing you, but also hosted a reception for Michigan PAs at the conference. It was great to see former Michigan PA and AAPA President-Elect Folusho Ogunfiditimi stop by to talk about his Michigan routes. We strive to engage our members through community functions, committees, educational activities, and the list continues! This year, the Fall MAPA Conference will be held in Grand Rapids at the Amway Grand from October 6-8. I urge you all to attend this amazing event and socialize and laugh with your fellow PA colleagues.

Finally, I would like to recognize all of the hard work that the MAPA committees and BOD are putting into the profession and the advocacy thereof. It is because of these individuals that you continue to live and work in the best state as a physician assistant! I urge you all to consider being not only a member of MAPA, but an active member by joining our committees. As little or as much time as you can give goes a long way, as well as gives you access to many seasoned and inspiring PA leaders.

I look forward to continuing and improving upon the hard work that others before me had put in. At a time with so many exciting items going on in the PA space, it will be great to tackle those items with all of your support and teamwork. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me to discuss your involvement in MAPA, or simply to converse about the profession. It will be a great time in Grand Rapids in the fall and I would like to welcome you all to attend in order to make this our biggest and best conference ever!



Ryan Desgrange, MS, PA-C  
MAPA President-Elect



# FROM THE INTERIM EDITOR



I hope everyone is enjoying the transition into the summer months and taking time to enjoy the company of friends and family while balancing busy work/summer activities schedules.

Your academy has been hard at work advocating for Michigan PAs on several fronts early on in 2022. It was exciting to see all the PAs and students at the Capitol Summit this year advocating and lobbying our state legislators on behalf of our profession. This event is a vital means by which our legislators can learn from and talk directly to practicing PAs who can communicate the daily administrative roadblocks many PAs face when trying to deliver care to our patients. We continue to see momentum to pass legislation which would add PAs to the mental health code and MAPA has had strategic meetings with BCBS to include PAs as primary care providers. Also included in this edition are the results of the priorities survey; summary of the issues YOU, the PA, believe MAPA should focus on.

MAPA is heading to Grand Rapids for the Fall Conference this year! Registration is now open, hope to see you there!

Finally, please consider getting involved with MAPA:

1. MAPA is looking for a newsletter editor. If you are interested in learning more, please email [mapa@michiganpa.org](mailto:mapa@michiganpa.org).
2. We are always looking for articles to include in the newsletter and we want to hear from you! Share your thoughts or opinions, submit a brief case report, write an essay, or author an article for any of our 3 newsletters (digital or print). Also, if you know of a unique PA you would like to spotlight, please send us an email [mapa@michiganpa.org](mailto:mapa@michiganpa.org).
3. Do you want to get involved and volunteer on a MAPA committee? Visit our volunteer page and see how you can become involved.



John Young, PA-C  
MAPA Communications Committee Chair

## MEET TEAM MAPA



Thadd Gormas  
Executive Director



Isaiah Perez  
Academy Director



Julie Frinzi  
Meetings Director



Betsy Smith  
Academy Advisor

# MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



## Using the Capitol Summit as an Analogy of your MAPA Membership

For the first time this past March, I participated in MAPA's Capitol Summit. I joined other Michigan PAs in Lansing and met with legislators to talk about medicine and PA-related issues. As I reflect on this experience, I can't help but think of it as an analogy of a membership in MAPA.

A quick summary – More than 40+ volunteer PAs and MAPA's Executive Director, Thadd Gormas, met with legislators in small groups. My group's conversations focused on SB 191 (Mental Health bill), PA name change, independent practice, barriers to practice and Covid experiences. All told, MAPA met with dozens of legislators on your behalf.

When I ask PAs who are not MAPA members, "why not," I often hear, "MAPA doesn't do anything." Now when I hear this response, it brings me back to my experience at the Capitol Summit. Although I enjoyed my time in Lansing, the simple fact is that no new legislation was passed on that day that affected Michigan PAs. In fact, it is possible that no new legislation will pass this year that affects Michigan PAs. From that standpoint, non-member PAs are right in the sense that "MAPA didn't do anything."

However, if you look a little deeper, you will understand the importance of your MAPA membership. At the Capitol Summit, your colleagues lobbied legislators at the grassroots level. These lawmakers will not only vote on SB 191 someday, but other PA-friendly legislation and hopefully, these meetings will influence votes favorably for years to come.

The majority of "what MAPA does" is behind the scenes, non-glamorous work on behalf of Michigan PAs – ensuring that our state remains one of the best places for PAs to practice in the country.

Get involved – join MAPA, volunteer and donate to PAMPAC.



Jeffrey Cornell, PA-C  
MAPA Membership Committee Chair

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The membership committee has been hard at work trying to offer new programs and offering to add value to your MAPA membership and to increase total number of MAPA members. I will briefly outline three new initiatives in 2022.

### Refer a Friend program

Every MAPA member is eligible for MAPA CME credit for every new member that is recruited to MAPA through July 31, 2022.

### Group Discount program

Organizations that recruit 5 or more PAs to join MAPA are eligible for discounted membership rates, based on the total number of PAs joining.

### Implicit Bias Training

MAPA has virtual training that is free to members and available to purchase for non-members. This is required training for maintaining your Michigan PA license.

*Please contact MAPA or check out our website for questions or information on all of these opportunities.*



# What MAPA Does For You

## Leadership & Advocacy for the PA Profession

- Legislative Advocacy
- Reimbursement Resources
- Legal Resources

## Education & Training

- Annual Fall CME Conference Offering 40+ Credits
- On-Demand Required Trainings
- Monthly MAPA Minute e-Newsletter
- Quarterly MichiganPA Newsletter

## Meetings & Networking

- Annual Capitol Summit
- Regional Pharmaceutical Dinners
- Regional Member Meet-Ups

## Student Support

- PA Student Guide
- Program to Practice Guide
- Career Center
- Resume Writing Resources

## MAPA Memberships

Student - \$40

*Current student of Board approved PA Program; One-time fee; Non-renewing*

1st Year Fellow - \$115

*First year post-graduation; Non-renewing*

Fellow - \$190\*

Fellow (Auto-Renew) - \$171\*\*

*Certified PA practicing in Michigan; \*Annual membership; \*\*Discounted auto-renewal*

Associate - \$115

*Certified PA outside of Michigan; Annual membership*

Affiliate - \$65

*Non-PA/PA student; Annual membership*

Retired - \$49

*Retired PAs; Annual membership*

# Join to Support Michigan PAs Who Support You



Scan to Join!



**Refer A Friend!**

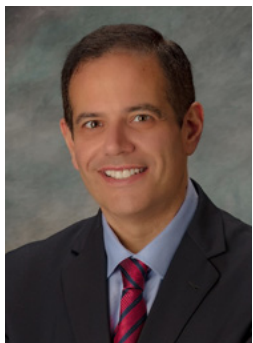
Earn \$50 credit toward any MAPA CME offering for every referral!

**EXTENDED TO JULY 31**



# REGISTER TODAY

Join us for MAPA's Fall CME Conference at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids. This in-person meeting offers high-caliber CME sessions across concurrent tracks featuring:



Keynote Speaker  
**Steven Kalkanis, MD**  
CEO, Henry Ford Medical Group  
Presentation: Transformative Trends in Healthcare



**NEW IN 2022!**

**MAPA is your #1 resource for CME credits!**

This year's conference offers more CME opportunities than ever. MAPA is recording all sessions in this dual-track program. Attend the conference in-person and then view the on-demand content for a total of 36\* CME credits.

*\*Pending approval by AAPA*

## Check Out the Lineup\*

### Thursday, October 6

**Transformative Trends in Healthcare**  
Steven Kalkanis, MD

**2023 E/M Billing Changes**  
Frank Levanduski, RHIT, CEMC

**Cannabis - The Good, the Bad & the Ugly**  
Tamara Ostin, PA-C

**Approach to Head Trauma**  
Michael Moore, MS, PA-C

**PrEP: What You Need to Know in 2022**  
Victoria Ervin, MPH, NP-C

**Where Have All the Platelets Gone?**  
Kelli Frost, MS, PA-C

**PANRE Pre: A Review of Common Eye Disorders**  
Heather Trudeau, MPAS, PA-C, DFAAPA

**Nailing the Diagnosis: Interesting Cases**  
Andrea Rosik, PA-C

**Pulse Check: PAs Within the Michigan Army National Guard**  
Chasity Falls, LTC, DMSc, PA-C

**Heart Talk: Acute Coronary Syndromes**  
Crystal Cusin, DNP, AGACNP-BC

**Your Documentation Matters! Do it Right**  
Craig Sheerin, MS, PA-C

*\* Program subject to change*

### Friday, October 7

**State of MAPA - Issues & Answers**  
Ryan Desgrange, MS, PA-C, MAPA President

**Musculoskeletal Radiology Interpretation**  
William Hakeos, MD

**Preoperative Assessment and Optimization: How to Prepare Patients for Best Outcomes**  
Nour Lyon, PA-C

**Genetics in Primary Care: Basic Approaches and Common Traits We All Need in Our Practice!**  
Andrea Amalfitano, DO, PhD

**Hematologic and Oncologic Emergencies**  
Mary Jo Pilat, PhD, MS, PA-C, CCRP

**Update from NCCPA: Focus on PANRE Alternative**  
Alicia Quella, PhD, PA-C

**Improving the Quality and Timeliness of Death Certificate Data**  
Jeffrey Duncan, PhD

**Infinite Shades of Gray: Can There be Reasonable Opioid Management in the Time of the Opioid Epidemic and Changing Guidelines?**

Katherine Behrenwald, PA-C

**Diabetic Ketoacidosis**  
Ainslee Rubino, MS, PA-C

**Cases in Anticoagulation and Transfusion Medicine**  
Stephanie Jalaba, MMS, PA-C

**Acute Abdomen from Nonsurgeon Perspective**  
Sean Mohon, DO

### Saturday October 8

**Antibiotics in Primary Care: A Systems Based Approach**  
Andrew Zolp, MSM, PA-C

**A Guide to the Management of Infertility**  
Amber Murphy, PA-C

**Update in Infectious Disease**  
Joel Fishbain, MD

**Integrative Medicine in Psychiatry**  
Lila Massoumi, MD

**How to Approach the Complete Blood Count**  
Steve Stone, PA-C

**Perinatal Mood Disorders - Is it the "Baby Blues" or Something More Ominous**  
Julia Burkhardt, MS, PA-C

**Sepsis Review: An ER Perspective**  
Nicholus Kopacki, DMSc, MPAS, PA-C, DFAAPA

**2021 CDC STD Treatment Guidelines: What's New?**  
Amanda Allmacher, DNP, RN

**Challenging Neurology Cases for the Non-neurologist**  
Allen Greenway, PA-C

**Does Discussing Migraines Give You a Headache?**  
Philip Eskew, DO, JD, MBA

**Heart Failure: A Patient's Perspective**  
Michelle Strange, DMSc, PA-C, RDCS (AE) (PE)

**Weight Loss Counseling in the Primary Care Setting**  
Courtney Galy, MPAS, MDA, PA-C, RDN

**The Twists and Turns of Antimicrobial Therapy in Respiratory Tract Infections**  
Jim Lile, PharmD

**Clinical Decision Mechanisms**  
Ewen Nicol, MS, PA-C

## HOTEL

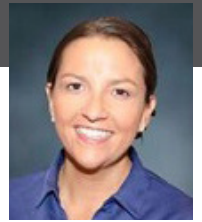
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616-774-2000 • [www.amwaygrand.com](http://www.amwaygrand.com)  
MAPA reservation link  
<https://book.passkey.com/e/50295369>  
To make reservations by phone: 800-253-3590  
Room Rate \$169 (Block cut off 9/15/22)

## REGISTRATION

\$420 member  
\$610 non-member  
\$165 student  
1 day registration – not available

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Samantha Danek, PA-C  
MAPA Legislative Committee Chair



Thanks to the support from MAPA members, 2022 continues to be a very successful year for Michigan PA advocates. On March 23rd, MAPA organized our Capitol Summit that was attended by over 50 PAs and students! The morning was spent visiting legislators, followed by CME lectures and an evening reception attended by House and Senate Health Policy Chair Representative Kahle and Senator VanderWall, among other legislative leaders. Because of your support, Michigan continues to be the best state for PAs to practice!



## **Great turnout for 2022 Capitol Summit**

As the legislative session approaches summer break, we continue to engage with our representatives to help advance and promote changes that are important to our patients and the health of all Michigan constituents. With your help, 2022 will define important practice improvements for Michigan PAs.

## **Adding PAs to the Mental Health Code – SB 191**

MAPA continues to advance Senate Bill 191 to add PAs to the Mental Health Code. The bill is sponsored by Senate Health Policy Chair Curt VanderWall, who continues to advocate for greater access to mental health services. Currently, PAs provide critically needed psychiatric and mental healthcare across Michigan. Yet they are not recognized as providers within the Mental Health Code, creating unnecessary reimbursement and employment obstacles. Please thank your Senator who voted for this bill; they all did.

This bill is currently in the House Health Policy Committee, chaired by Representative Bronna Kahle from Adrian, Vice Chaired by Representative Luke Meerman from Ottawa County, and Minority Vice Chair, Angela Whitwer, from Delta Township. We will need your help by contacting your State Representative to urge their support. Your efforts will allow this bill to move forward to a vote in the House of Representatives.

## **Create Tax Credit for PA Preceptors – SB 999**

Introduced by Senator VanderWall in March 2022, this bill would create a tax credit for PA preceptors in an amount equal to \$1,000.00 for every 250 hours completed at an approved health care site, for up to \$5,000.00 per tax year.

## **PAs to Sign Death Certificates – HB 5615**

While Michigan PAs have long been able to pronounce death, only physicians have been able to sign death certificates. This has created a lack of transparency for patients and a backlog for funeral homes as in many cases PAs are the attending primary provider for the patient. This has caused long delays as funeral directors try to find qualified providers to sign the death certificate. Our Executive Director, Thadd Gormas' recent testimony to Michigan legislators, solidified that PAs have the education and training to pronounce death and are currently left to reach out to physicians outside of the treatment team to sign death certificates. MAPA continues to work with the Michigan Funeral Directors Association and stakeholders to change this regulation.

A call to action was sent to all Michigan PAs in May to oppose changes to House Bill 5615 which were proposed by the Michigan State Medical Society (MSMS). Their intent is to require every PA to amend their practice agreement in order to be required to sign death certificates. Amending the practice agreement with this language should not be done without a review from your legal counsel. This will increase costs for our patients while providing no additional benefits. Unfortunately, proposing barriers for our patients is becoming a more regular occurrence from MSMS. We will continue working with the sponsor and the Senate to restore the bill's intent to the introduced version.

Thanks to the last minute efforts of Michigan PAs.

Here are the legislators who voted against HB 5615 even after it was supported by the Local Government and Municipal Finance Committee. Take a moment to thank them because if the bill is amended in the Senate, it will come back to a House vote.

Representative Sue Allor  
Representative Tommy Brann  
Representative Steve Carra  
Representative Gary Eisen  
Representative Annette Glenn  
Representative Michelle Hoytenga  
Representative Steven Johnson  
Representative Matt Koleszar  
Representative Amos O'Neal  
Representative Lauri Pohutsky  
Representative John Reilly  
Representative Regina Weiss

Please email me at [samantha.r.danek@gmail.com](mailto:samantha.r.danek@gmail.com) to join our Legislative Committee. If you don't have time, contribute to the PAs of Michigan PAC. MAPA's membership dues cannot be directed towards the PAC funding and 100% of donations are utilized to support Michigan Senators and Representatives who support PAs.



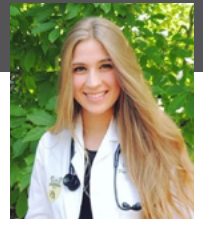
# CAPITOL SUMMIT

## From Capitol "S" to Capitol "C"

As first-year PA students, we began our journeys by collecting our "toolboxes." The hip-length whitecoat highlighted with "PA-S," and the stethoscope became the bread and butter of our beginnings. We quickly learned that a stethoscope is not only a tool that naturally nestles around our necks, but it is in some ways a symbol that one has entered into the world of medicine. I recall some students engraving "PA-C" on their stethoscopes as a reminder of where they were headed. For me, I knew I needed to start practicing time-efficient charting, so I decided to engrave an acronym to live by. I engraved, "+ CY, C the W." This has two meanings; one is, "With Positivity, Challenge Yourself and Challenge the World," and the second is, "See why and say why." I knew then, as future PAs, we would never stop challenging ourselves and challenging others to find the answers to "Why?" When we find the answers and explain why, we unearth the reasoning behind those answers. When we find the reasoning, we then find the solutions and those solutions lead to effective change for the betterment of patient health and wellness.

The "-C" is not only a symbol of a certified practicing professional, but it also signifies excellence, determination, and most importantly—change. It is the letter that becomes the almighty force that drives us forward in the two to three years as students that we hustle day in and day out. It remains a symbol that we have reached the ability to practice medicine at the forefront of healthcare. As a student, in the very essence of this symbol, what it truly means to be a PA is a malleable yet ever-powerful force that is constantly redefined by every experience and new role we step into as a member of the PA community. The recent MAPA Capitol Summit Event was certainly one of these redefining experiences.

Rachel Snabes, PA-S  
Wayne State University



Students from different PA schools across the state joined together for our first Capitol Summit event. No one knew exactly what to expect but surely the experience spoke for itself. Each of us had the opportunity to advocate with PAs from various specialties and backgrounds to speak to legislators on behalf of who we are collectively, as current and future PAs, and what we can do to improve health care.

We spoke on the positive impact PAs can have on psychiatric care by passing Senate Bill 191 which would amend the mental health code to include PAs along with APRNs and clinical nurse specialists. The discussions helped legislators understand how this change would maximize the ability of PAs to provide effective patient care through the application of acquired training, education, experience, and skill set. This undoubtedly encompassed understanding for future legislative changes for PA practice. From touring the capitol building to visiting legislators in their respective offices, to listening to educational presentations, we were able to capture a picture of how change is made. It was sensorially motivating and impactful to have been a part of learning about the legislative process in combination with experiencing how professional advocacy on the part of MAPA, AAPA, and PAs in Michigan, moves the PA practice forward – expanding access to care, allowing PAs to improve the health of patients across the state.

PAs, alongside other Advanced Practice Providers, are undoubtedly the future of medicine and it is time to advance positive change in our profession and the lives of our patients through advocacy. From the students who attended the event, we encourage future PAs, current PAs, and past PAs to discover and engage in the endless possibilities to be involved in the advancement of the PA profession.

PAs will be the change people need to see in the world.

# AAPA HOUSE OF DELEGATES UPDATE

Eight Michigan PAs represented the state of Michigan at the 2022 American Academy of PAs House of Delegate (AAPA HOD) meeting during May 2022. These delegates have been preparing all year to attend and represent Michigan PAs. The House of Delegates holds an annual voting meeting during which delegations from across the nation discuss potential policies that will shape our profession for decades to come.

In order to support over 7,000 Michigan PAs, MAPA sent out a survey asking PAs what issues were important to us. One of those issues was supporting preceptors who struggle to support our profession. At the request of MAPA's Membership Committee and their chair, Jeff Cornell PA-C, the Michigan Contingent was asked to put in a resolution requesting AAPA to increase the Category 1 CME hours that PA preceptors can apply for. There were two days of intriguing debate on this and other topics. We can finally now say **Spearheaded by MAPA's delegates, working along with New York delegates, we were able to change the total amount of Category 1 CME hours for precepting PA students from a total of 20 per year to unlimited!** This will go into effect later this summer.

Other policies discussed and passed this year dealt with things like immunizations in children and adults, team based care, button battery safety, and the utilization of telemedicine services by PAs.

Julia Burkhardt, MS, PA-C  
Chief HOD Delegate



The policies discussed vary from year-to-year. If you have a practice or policy issue that you believe the MAPA delegation should bring forward during the 2023 meeting in Nashville, please make sure to email your ideas to [mapa@michiganpa.org](mailto:mapa@michiganpa.org) and they will be forwarded to your HOD representatives.

I would like to thank my fellow delegates for their time and efforts, not only on behalf of Michigan PAs, but PAs across the country:



(left to right)  
Brittanie Hamlin, PA-C  
Julia Burkhardt, PA-C  
Tracy Karinen, PA-C  
Ron Stavale, PA-C  
Heather Sutton, PA-C  
Mary Huyck, PA-C  
Zarna Patel, PA-C  
Charles Regan, PA-C  
Casey Kolp, PA-C  
(not in photo)

# SUPPORT LEGISLATORS WHO SUPPORT PAs

Ron Stavale, PA-C



## Donate to PAMPAC

Writing an article asking PAs to donate money to a political action committee (PAC) isn't much fun, but someone has to do it! Simply stated, running for political office is quite expensive and a PAC is an organization created to help support a legislator win an election or stay in office. As a non-profit organization, MAPA cannot use membership dues to donate to a PAC, so the donations have to come from individuals and hopefully one of those individuals is you!

Our PAC is called Physician Assistants of Michigan Political Action Committee (PAMPAC). It is beneficial for our profession's wellbeing to have legislators in office that are not only aware of who PAs are but who actually support PAs. Case in point would be MAPA's groundbreaking law, Public Act 379, which passed in 2016. The sponsor of that bill was a physician, Ned Canfield, who became a member of Michigan's House of Representatives. MAPA's PAMPAC supported Dr. Canfield in his election and his subsequent re-election. Dr. Canfield had worked with PAs in his office and understood some of the barriers that we faced and was supportive of our efforts to modernize our PA laws. It is difficult to say what would have happened if he was never elected, but it is easy to say that his support was crucial to the passing of PA 379.

With the direction of Executive Director and Lobbyist, Thadd Gormas and our Legislative Committee, led by Samantha Danek PA-C, MAPA gets to know legislators who are supportive of PAs and through time, we are able to build a trusting relationship with those legislators. PAMPAC is the single mechanism in Lansing for PAs to help elect and keep legislators in office. Since we need individuals to donate to the PAC, we try to reach out to you at our conferences and since the pandemic those opportunities became limited.

As we are nearing elections this fall, without proper funding, our advocates in the legislature may lose their bids for reelection. This could negatively impact initiatives that MAPA is pursuing for Michigan PAs. By donating to a political action committee, you're investing in your profession's future. Any and all donations to PAMPAC will help to strengthen our voice and position as health care providers in Michigan. It isn't a lot of fun to reach into your pockets and donate to a PAC, but someone has to do it! Invest in your future, donate to PAMPAC.



To all the faithful who have given over the years, Michigan PAs sincerely thank you; your continued giving has been the foundation of our success and has provided a better practice environment for all PAs.

Since the onset of the pandemic, MAPA has not been able to hold as many events where we could request donations for our PAC. MAPA's Political Action Committee would like to thank the following individuals for their donations that were given in 2019 and subsequent years.

These are investments for the future of our PA profession. Special recognition goes to Michelle Petropoulos and Elizabeth White for their 'above and beyond' donations.

**Barb Begian**  
**Kelsie Blamer**  
**Mary Boayne**  
**Andrew Booth**  
**Jon Borton**  
**Angela Braun\***  
**Julia Burkhardt\***  
**Janet Burns**  
**Jeffrey Cornell\***  
**Jacob Coughlin**  
**Samantha Danek\***  
**Lashon Day**  
**John Densmore**  
**Ryan Desgrange\***  
**Rebekah Dunn**  
**Gale Easton**  
**Abby Ebbing**  
**Janine Forche**  
**Stephanie Gilkey**

**Michelle Gormas\***  
**Thadd Gormas**  
**Ruth Herman**  
**Rebecca Kahn**  
**William Kammel**  
**Tracy Karinen**  
**James Kilmark**  
**Alyssa King**  
**Katie Lukovich**  
**Beth Malott**  
**Michelle Mardegian**  
**Dennis Marien\***  
**Krystal Martin**  
**Roger Mausolf**  
**Katherine McCormak**  
**Kristan Moran**  
**Daric Mueller**  
**David Patel**  
**Sarang Patel\***

**Molly Paulson**  
**Michelle Petropoulos\***  
**Mary Jo Pilat**  
**Austin Ruffin**  
**Kate Schisler\***  
**David Segroves**  
**Felicia Shaya**  
**Natasha Smith**  
**Ron Stavale\***  
**Nathan Stuart**  
**Heather Sutton**  
**Marcos Vargas**  
**Michael White**  
**Elizabeth White**  
**Adam Wilson\***  
**Suzanne York**  
**Rita Youkhana**  
**John Young\***  
**Jodi Zych\***

\* multiple donations



# BLUE CROSS MEETING WITH PAs

On March 16th, 2022, Michigan PA leaders once again met with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) Medical Directors to discuss PAs as Primary Care Providers (PCPs).

In attendance for BCBSM: Dr. Grant, Chief Medical Officer; Dr. Betzelos, Chief Medical Officer Blue Care Network; Dr. McKenzie, BCBSM Associate CMO and VP of Clinical Partnerships; Dr. Beecroft, Medical Director of Behavioral Health Services; Anthony Green, Healthcare Manager Compliance and Projects and Maureen Munselle, Advanced Systems Analyst.

Michelle Petropoulos, PA-C MAPA President, James Kilmark, PA-C Reimbursement Committee Chairman, Thadd Gormas, Executive Director MAPA, Rebecca Kahn, PA-C Reimbursement Committee member, Michelle Gormas PA-C practice owner and MAPA member, Rachel Lethorn, PA-C practice owner and MAPA member, Don Clark, PA-C practice owner and MAPA member, were all in attendance to re-open dialogue with BCBSM officials regarding the positive impact PAs provide patients of Michigan.

Michigan PA leaders were able to provide sobering clinical scenarios on how patients can be affected when the care provided to patients of Michigan is negatively affected by third party payer rules that do not allow PAs the ability to be identified / credentialed as primary care providers. Patients are impacted by the lack of their PA's ability to coordinate their patient's care with high-quality specialists and when they are hospitalized. BCBSM members pay high specialty copays when their PCP is a PA. Adverse impacts on PAs' patients caused by BCBSM's lack of PCP designation included hospitalizations and even premature death.

Testimonials were provided by Michelle Petropoulos, Rachel Lethorn, Michelle Gormas and Don Clark on how they provide high quality care to their patients and used examples to illustrate how patients continue to be negatively affected when the PA who provides their primary care cannot be credentialed by BCBSM / BCN products. Rebecca Kahn, PA-C was able to provide perspective on how BCBSM of Michigan is the last remaining Michigan payer that does not identify PAs as Primary Care Providers. BCBSM has identified NPs as PCPs for many years.

BCBSM Medical Directors admitted that more research on their end needed to be done before they could provide details on the potential implementation of policies allowing PCP designation. The medical directors did not understand why NPs would qualify as PCPs under their policies but not PAs. They suggested a goal of credentialing PAs as PCPs within one year.

Jim Kilmark, PA-C



James Kilmark, PA-C explained to officials that without the transparency of being designated as PCPs, the true impact of care provided by PAs cannot be identified.

Family medicine practice owner, Michelle Gormas, PA-C, explained in practices where PAs are providing high-quality care leading to positive outcomes and lower cost, only physicians can take credit for a PA's quality scores and a PA's patient's health outcome. Low-quality physicians are able to receive high-quality bonuses by passing off the care from their PA colleagues as their own. There is little incentive for PAs or these physicians to improve patient care which is the intent of the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) incentives.

**Plans are in process to schedule a follow-up meeting to further understand progress from BCBSM to implement the PCP designation for PAs.**

Other items to be discussed will include how PAs can provide further access to patients with mental health needs. Due to the shortage of providers caring for patients with mental health needs, MAPA explained that PAs entering this area of practice allow more high-quality behavioral healthcare access. Dr. Beecroft, Medical Director of Behavioral Health Services, provided a short dialogue on how developing programs under BCBSM to provide the right care at the right time will prevent patients from entering the Emergency Room safety net where patients suffer long stays awaiting the care they need.

MAPA's Reimbursement Committee will continue to request updates from BCBSM and report progress to members.

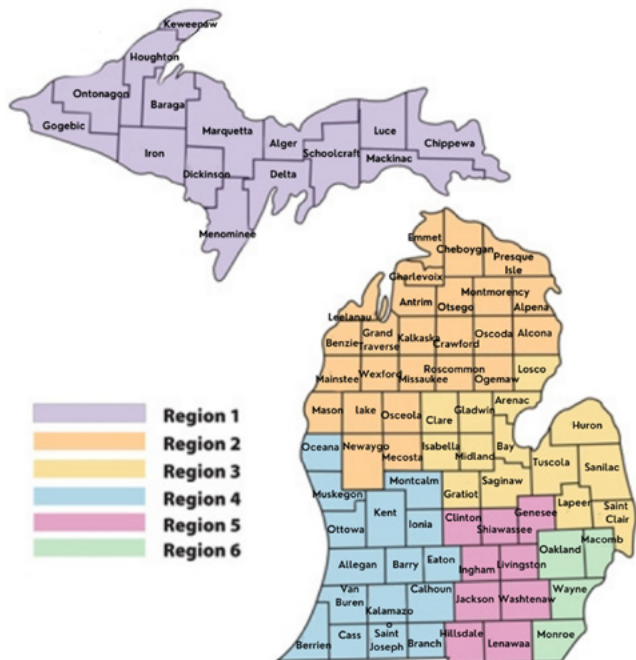
## PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Public Affairs Committee is very proud to collaborate with PAs, PA-S, and prospective PAs within the state of Michigan to help promote togetherness and networking. The Public Affairs Committee has been able to develop material on the importance of COVID vaccinations as well as a mosaic of Michigan PAs getting vaccinated. Furthermore, a member of the committee was able to highlight the importance of childhood vaccinations during the pandemic through educational materials. In collaboration with other MAPA committees and region representatives, we are proud to support events through attendance and provide mentorship that helps strengthen and move our profession forward. We want to hear from you if you would like to be more involved - everyone is welcome!



Felicia Shaya DMSc, PA-C  
Public Affairs Committee Chair

# REGION REPRESENTATIVE UPDATES



I earned the designation of HIV Specialist from the American Academy of HIV Medicine in 2020. I am currently an adjunct instructor with LMU PA programs in both Harrogate and Knoxville, Tennessee. I currently serve as a Regional Representative for the MAPA. In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my Beagle mix canine companion, Beatrice!



## Region 4 Representative – William Kammel, PA-C Grand Rapids, MI

I completed both my bachelors and master's degrees at the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Since obtaining my PA-C, I have been working and living in the west Michigan area. My clinical work has included practicing in urgent care, occupational medicine, addiction medicine, and for the past 4+ years, psychiatry. I completed a 12-month PA psychiatry residency program through the Veterans Healthcare Administration in Houston Texas in 2019 and have continued working with the VHA in outpatient psychiatry. I enjoy volunteering and have served on medical mission's trips to the Philippines (2012) and Haiti (2017). I have also volunteered as the Region 4 Representative for the MAPA Board of Directors starting in 2019 and I look forward to serving another term. I live in the Grand Rapids area with my wife and two children. We love our neighborhood and neighborhood soccer league and personally I dabble in endurance sports (running and triathlons) and starting but not quite finishing multiple projects around the house. I enjoy meeting new and passionate people and look forward to connecting with Region 4 this year. Do not hesitate to email with questions, thoughts, or concerns at [maparegion4rep@michiganpa.org](mailto:maparegion4rep@michiganpa.org).



## Region 1 Representative – Mike White, PA-C Marquette, MI

I have been a Physician Assistant for the last 31 years. I am an alumnus of the University of Notre Dame and I attended PA school at the University of Texas Southwestern at Dallas. For the last 15 years, I have worked in the Emergency Department at UP Health System in Marquette, Michigan. I stay active in the UP with trail running, cross country skiing, and fishing.



## Region 2 Representative – Jon Borton, PA-C Cadillac, MI

I was born and raised in northern Michigan. I have been a PA since 2007 and have worked for the past 15 years in primary care for Baldwin Family Health Care. My Master of Science degree was obtained from Central Michigan University, where I also attended for undergraduate education. I have been involved in MAPA since 2020 but have been a member since my student years. My wife and I have 2 children. We enjoy spending time camping and watching movies together. I like being outdoors and playing sports.



## Region 3 Representative – Jonathan Albers, DMS, PA-C Bad Axe, MI

I am a proud Michigan PA practicing in hospital medicine at a rural critical access facility within the thumb. I am a 2022 graduate of Butler University with a Doctor of Medical Science and a focus on Healthcare Administration and Practice. I am a 2018 graduate of Lincoln Memorial University's Harrogate Campus PA program. Upon graduating from PA training, I practiced in South Florida in the fields of outpatient internal medicine and HIV medicine.



## Region 5 Representative – Katie Lukovich, PA-C Grand Blanc, MI

Katie is a graduate from the University of Detroit Mercy Physician Assistant program. While in school, she was involved with AAPA and was elected to the student board of directors as north central regional director. She currently works full time at a private practice plastic surgery office spending half of her time as a first assistant in surgery and the other half in clinic as an aesthetic injector. She has been a part of MAPA for several years and loves the opportunity to serve the PAs of Region 5.



## Region 6 Representative – Becky Cronin, PA-C Clinton Township, MI

Hello! My name is Becky and I'm a graduate from Western Michigan University. I'm a scientist turned Physician Assistant because as much as I loved research, I missed people and wanted to be able to serve in a more direct way. In the past, I have worked in multiple clinical settings, including critical care, plastics and reconstructive surgery as well as locum's emergency medicine positions. I'm looking forward to helping get Michigan PAs more engaged with MAPA to help move our profession forward and maintain the excellent practice laws Michigan has for PAs!



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Jim Kilmark, PA-C

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Ainslee Rubino, PA-C

## REGISTRATION IS OPEN



Connect with fellow PAs  
Earn valuable CME credits  
Gain hands-on clinical experience



## New Rule to MI Public Health Code

As of June 1, 2022, all licensed PAs in Michigan will be required to complete training on implicit bias for license renewal.

Register for Implicit Bias lecture from the MAPA 2021  
Fall CME Conference at [MichiganPA.org](http://MichiganPA.org)



### Implicit Bias 101: Implicit Bias and the Healthcare Provider

Ashley Malliett, DMSc,  
MPAS, PA-C

Henry Ford Health System  
1 AAPA Category 1 CME Credit\*

\*This program is not yet approved for CME credit. Organizers plan to apply for 1 AAPA Category 1 CME credit from the AAPA Review Panel. The total number of approved credit is yet to be determined.





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of PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS



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