The Child Protectors
Alumna, pediatrician help children affected by abuse

Every day, Amanda Palm, PA-C, LCSW, (MPAS ’14) works to protect the lives of children. As a PA in the UW Health Child Protection Program, she and national expert Barbara Knox, MD, provide clinical consultation to medical teams, law enforcement and social-services agencies on suspected cases of child abuse.

One of only a few PAs in this field, Palm has a unique job. It can also be emotionally difficult. But she says that even for the most challenging cases, “knowing that you’re helping is really powerful.”

**From Social Worker to PA**
Before entering the PA Program, Palm was a social worker in the family preservation program at Journey Mental Health Center in Madison, Wisconsin. She provided therapy for families whose children were at risk of being removed from the home due to abuse or neglect. In that role, she interacted with many medical professionals, including Dr. Knox.

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Dr. Dipesh Navsaria Named a Wisconsin Academy Fellow

Dipesh Navsaria, MD, MPH, MSLIS, the PA Program’s medical director, received a 2018 Academy Fellows Award from the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

Dr. Navsaria was one of 14 fellows inducted this year. The prestigious award recognizes educators, researchers, mentors, artists and civic or business leaders from across Wisconsin who have made substantial contributions to the cultural life and welfare of our state and its people.

Dr. Navsaria aims to educate the next generation of people who work with children and families to realize how their professional roles include larger concepts of social policy, and how they may positively affect children’s cognitive and socioemotional development.

In addition to his role in the PA Program, Dr. Navsaria is an associate professor in the UW Department of Pediatrics and the director of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health’s MD–MPH program.

He’s also the vice president of the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the medical director for Reach Out and Read Wisconsin and a co-founder of the Early Literacy subcommittee of the Council on Early Childhood.

Congratulations on this honor!

PA Program Medical Director Dr. Dipesh Navsaria was named a 2018 fellow of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

Child Protectors, con’t.

Upon meeting a former family therapist who had since become a PA, Palm decided to take the next step in her career. She applied to only one program—UW–Madison—and was “blown away” when she was accepted.

“You feel such a sense of accomplishment for getting into such a prestigious program, and once you’re in, everyone really bonds together,” she reflects.

While a student, she completed a clinical rotation with Dr. Knox, and after graduation, successfully applied for a full-time position working with her.

‘A Big, Complex Picture’

Today, Palm and Dr. Knox staff a clinical service that provides medical evaluation of children suspected to be abuse victims. Referrals come from within American Family Children’s Hospital, or from Child Protective Services, law enforcement or community physicians. Every case, and every day, is different.

“In this field, a background in social work is invaluable,” Palm explains. “You have to understand not just the medical issues, but the social perspectives of a case. It’s all intertwined in a big, complex picture.”

Palm particularly appreciates the working relationship she has with Dr. Knox. “She respects my autonomy, yet is always available for questions,” she notes. “We really consider each other colleagues.”

Raising Awareness

Although aspects of her job can be heartbreaking, Palm keeps a scientific outlook and remembers that her presence makes a difference.

She and Dr. Knox also provide outreach to students, clinicians and colleagues on ways to prevent, recognize and treat child abuse.

“We all want to believe the best in people, but unfortunately, child abuse does happen,” she says. “By educating medical staff and the community, we can work together to prevent it.”

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Alumni Reflections

Enjoy more reflections from our alumni! Share yours at: go.wisc.edu/657684

Jan Idzikowski (1977)
After 25 years in trauma and hand/upper extremity surgery in Vail, Colorado, which came after 15 years in cardiovascular surgery and orthopedics in Wisconsin, I moved to New Hampshire to be the orthopedic presence at a small critical-access community hospital. I also specialize in musculoskeletal problems in performing artists, especially musicians.

Carol (McNamer) Finucan (1982)
After working full-time for nearly 35 years, mostly in emergency medicine, I have retired. I always loved my PA career, working with and learning from smart doctors and nurses, while at the same time being given great responsibility and independence. Providers from my generation have had to adapt to many changes and innovations in the practice of medicine, but the patients have always been the same.

Laura (Maiers) Hobbs (1990; MPAS 2017)
I’m currently working at an Aurora Health Care family medicine clinic, and have been there for 17 years. The things I love about being a PA include making a positive difference in the lives of people, being a respected member of the community and being able to work with my husband who is a family physician.

While I was in PA school I became pregnant and had a little girl on Christmas Day, 1989. That little girl is now completing her first year of residency in a family medicine program in Rochester, New York. I did not know then that all those lectures she heard in utero would leave a lasting impression, but they did!

Courtney (Johnson) Warren (2002; MPAS 2014)
I have worked at GI Associates, the largest independent gastroenterology practice in southeastern Wisconsin, since 2006. I’ve enjoyed seeing the growth of our profession. I remember when I first started practicing, I had a rehearsed line for patients explaining what a PA is.

Inga Storbakken (2004)
I am currently employed with a private hospitalist group based in Chicago. I am the lead PA and help oversee our hospitalist scribe program. I also assist in billing/coding review, clinical documentation improvement, onboarding of new physicians and midlevels, and patient satisfaction. I love the scope of practice of being a PA: the diverse opportunities to work in all different types of specialties, as well as non-clinical areas, academic programs, and mentoring prospective and enrolled students. Being a PA is an ever-changing, ever-growing career with endless opportunities!

Candy (Droeszler) Temperly (2005)
I work full time in family practice for Medical Associates in Platteville, Wisconsin. I started there after graduation in 2005. I see patients of all ages and do a lot of procedures, well-men and well-women exams and well-child visits. I have a large patient panel and see a lot of acute and same-day patients as well.

Yvonne Clark (2009)
I have worked in dermatology since graduation. I started in academics (pediatric dermatology), went to medical dermatology with an HMO group and am now in private practice (medical and cosmetic dermatology). I have had the opportunity to publish, speak at a national conference and be recognized by the State of California and County of San Diego for my community service. I have also been lucky to be recognized by my patients for making a difference in their lives through Sharp Healthcare’s Guardian Angel program.

Brian Vike (2014)
I am employed at Mercy Hospital in Coon Rapids, Minnesota. I was recently awarded a Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) in emergency medicine from the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants.
THREE GREAT WAYS
to stay connected with the UW–Madison PA Program

1. Share an alumni reflection
Did your address change? Have any big accomplishments? Got great memories from PA school?
We’d love to hear from you and share your stories and photos in a future newsletter.
Contact us at:
go.wisc.edu/657684

2. Become a volunteer preceptor
Share your knowledge and help educate future PAs.
You’ll pay it forward and receive benefits of a UW–Madison appointment, including campus access and potential CME credit.
Learn more at:
go.wisc.edu/4bi5k4

3. Join our Facebook group
Keep in touch with us in real time on social media!
You’ll find job opportunities, program news, student and alumni stories, and more.
Visit Facebook and search for: UW–Madison Physician Assistant Program