



Physician Assistant SPOTLIGHT

For alumni and friends of the University of Wisconsin–Madison Physician Assistant Program

SPRING 2024

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KEEP IN TOUCH!

University of Wisconsin–Madison
Physician Assistant Program

Health Sciences Learning Center
750 Highland Avenue, Room 1278
Madison, WI 53705

Phone: (608) 263-5620
Toll-free: (800) 442-6698
Email: paprogram@med.wisc.edu

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Wausau Campus Celebrates Its First Ten Years

Ten years ago, when the School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) Physician Assistant (PA) Program welcomed its first cohort of students to its distance campus in northern Wisconsin, they knew they were on the right track.

“We take our mission very seriously, and part of that is to ensure our program is accessible to every demographic,” says PA Program Director Ginny Snyder, PhD, PA-C, who led the team that developed the full-time, 24-month distant campus, known as *wisPACT@UW–Stevens Point at Wausau*. “There is a strong need to train students who live in rural and underserved areas.”

Developed through a successful Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant, the distant campus allows students to remain in northern Wisconsin for their physician assistant education. There, they attend live lectures and discussions through videoconferencing between the UW–Stevens Point at Wausau campus and



wisPACT@UW–Stevens Point at Wausau’s first graduates

the main campus in Madison. Skills labs are conducted onsite by UW–Madison PA Program faculty. Second-year students conduct clinical rotations in and around their home communities.

Snyder says that, because the track was designed specifically for candidates who plan to practice in northern Wisconsin after graduation, keeping the students in the region helps them maintain existing community ties and facilitates future employment opportunities.

(Continued on page 2)

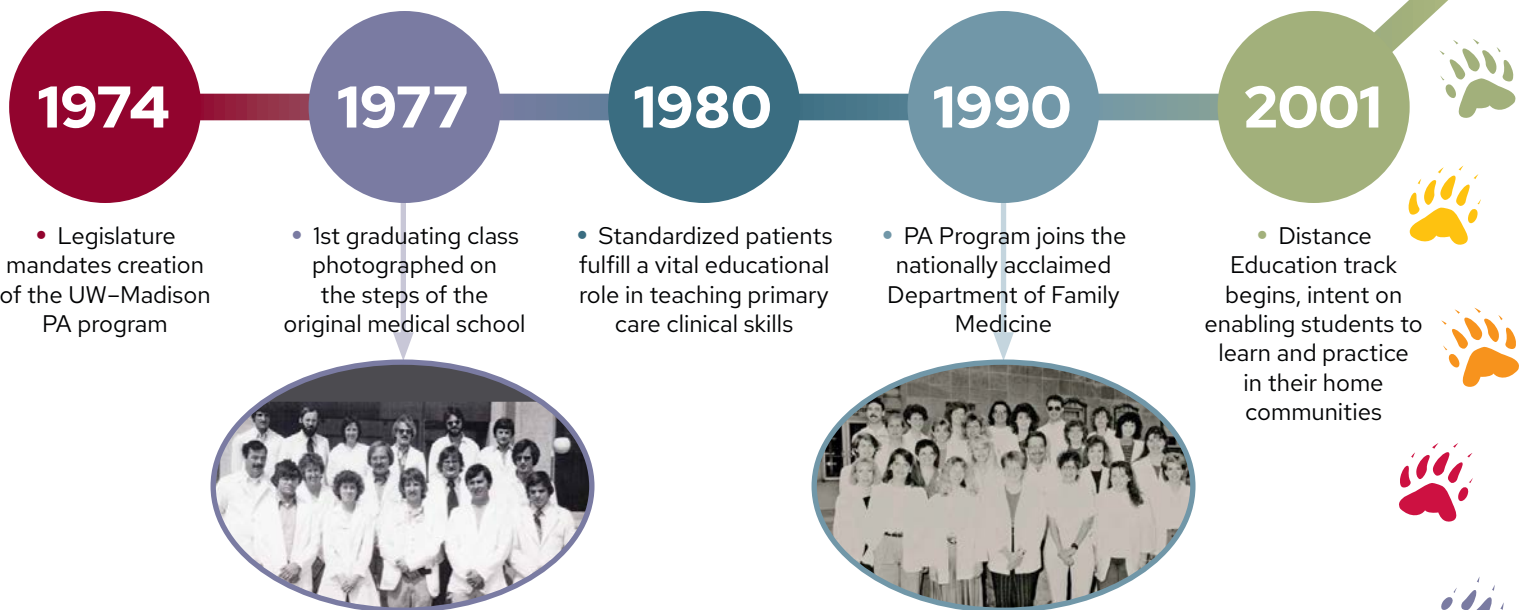
Spotlight: Spring 2024

wisPACT@UW Stevens Point... (Continued from page 1)

And it works. Today, 70 percent of *wisPACT* alumni practice in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) or rural area. Nearly half of them work in primary care.

"It just made sense to meet the students where they are," Snyder says.

Visit: med.wisc.edu/education/physician-assistant-pa-program/preceptors/preceptor-signup-form



MAKING TRACKS

PA Program students on the UW-Madison campus are accustomed to hearing their instructors begin each class by welcoming students who aren't even in the room. That's because dozens of PA Program students who are enrolled in the PA Program's community-based learning options attend classes via videoconferencing, tuning in from Platteville, Wausau or even their own homes.

Community-based learning provides flexibility and opportunities based on each student's interest in caring for patients in underserved areas:

- Part-time **Distance Education (DE) tracks** enroll students living within driving distance of Madison (regional DE) or living in a medically underserved area (traditional DE). The DE track matriculated its first class (of two students!) in 2001. Today, it accepts 16 students each year.
- The full-time ***wisPACT@UW-Stevens Point at Wausau distant campus*** enrolls students with a strong connection to northern Wisconsin and a desire to practice in this region after graduation. Students in their second year complete clinical rotations in and around their home community. With four students enrolled in 2014, the track has expanded to 12 students per year.
- Welcoming its first cohort of 10 students just last year, the full-time ***wisPACT@UW-Platteville distant campus*** targets the tri-state region (Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa) which is experiencing a significant shortage of health care professionals, especially in rural communities. Most students complete clinical rotations in the region's rural communities.

To learn more about these and other physician assistant education opportunities, visit:

med.wisc.edu/education/physician-assistant-pa-program/curriculum/program-tracks/

2004

- PA Program moves to its new home, the state-of-the-art Health Sciences Learning Center



2010

- Transition from bachelor's degree to Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS)



2014

- Inaugural class for wisPACT @UW-Stevens Point at Wausau

2023

- Inaugural class for wisPACT@ UW-Platteville at Wausau



2024

- wisPACT @UW-Stevens Point at Wausau 10th anniversary

New Faculty Member Chelsie R. Pagel, MPAS, PA-C

Chelsie R. Pagel, MPAS, PA-C '17, has joined the PA Program's faculty as the first clinical instructor to teach onsite at wisPACT@UW-Stevens Point at Wausau. A native of central Wisconsin, Pagel is herself an alum of the program, having matriculated with its second class. Since then she has enjoyed working in Wausau at ENT & Allergy Associates.

Pagel says she is excited about returning to the classroom and strengthening community connections – activities that she says share a common thread. "Every patient, every community is unique. I love being able to connect and meet individuals where they are and tailoring educational opportunities to their circumstances."



Chelsie Pagel • Photo: VOSStudios

Congrats to the 2023 Challenge Bowl Champs!

Congratulations to PA Program teammates, and coach Brad Ecklor, for bringing home the gold at the 2023 WAPA Challenge Bowl!

Enjoy more photos of the Wisconsin Academy of Physicians Assistants (WAPA) event here: uwpa.smugmug.com/WAPA-Bowl-2023



The Winners! PA Program students Marissa Block, Alyssa Lovergine, and Nathan Lesnick

Photo: Michelle Ostmo



Student Receives Pre-professional Scholarship

Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisconsin (GHC-SCW), has recognized PA Program student Marina Melby with a 2023 Pre-Professional Medical Diversity Scholarship. As a child visiting her great grandmother on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota, Melby

saw firsthand the impact of health disparities on her loved ones. As a future PA, Melby hopes to ensure that indigenous people have positive relationships with their health care providers and receive timely and equitable care. Congratulations, Marina!



Physician Assistant Program

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Health Sciences Learning Center
750 Highland Avenue, Room 1278
Madison, WI 53705

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THREE GREAT WAYS

to stay connected with the UW–Madison PA Program

1



SHARE AN ALUMNI REFLECTION

Where are you practicing now?
Any big accomplishments to
announce? Great memories from
PA school to share?

We'd love to print your news 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 an UW–Madison
appointment, including campus
access and potential CME credit.

Learn more at:
med.wisc.edu/pa-preceptor

3



BE A GUEST LECTURER

Want to share your expertise with
eager-to-learn PA students?

Learn about guest lecturing for
the PA Program.

Contact us at:
paprogram@med.wisc.edu