

Bridging the Gap Between PA Programs and Postgraduate Residencies and Fellowships

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Educational Goals of Paper Presentation:

1. Identify characteristics and attributes of successful postgraduate PA residents/fellows.
2. Describe the potential benefits of establishing a relationship between PA Programs and postgraduate residency/fellowship programs.
3. Understand the overall expectations and goals of PAs during and at the conclusion of a postgraduate residency/fellowship.
4. Identify qualified candidates among PA students and be able to direct their training and studies to better prepare for postgraduate education/training in the specialty of their choice.

Presenters:

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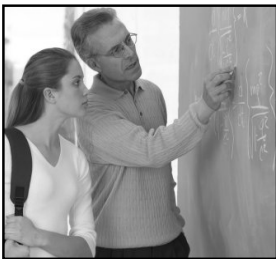
● ● Bridging the Gap Between PA Programs and Postgraduate Residencies and Fellowships

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● ● Options to Aid the Transition of New Grads and PAs in Specialty Medicine



- Find institution with ideal mentorship/ orientation
- Self-study
- "Grin and bear it"
- *Postgraduate training*

● ● Why Post-graduate Training?



● ● Challenges Facing PAs

- Demands for PAs in *all* areas of medicine
 - Downsizing of physician workforce
- Physician expectation of high levels of performance upon entrance into a practice/ specialty regardless of level of experience
 - Places high demands on new graduates and PAs changing fields of practice
 - Higher level of autonomy required

● ● Challenges Facing PAs

- Academic health centers' reliance on PAs
 - Large case/patient load
 - Resident hours
 - Patient care and safety
 - Continuity of care
 - Resident teaching
 - Mentoring new PAs
 - Attending responsibilities
 - Research
- Pressure on PA programs to increase program size
 - Current applicants/students have less clinical experience than past PA students
 - Demographics have changed over last two decades



Specialized Training: Filling the Gap...

- Dubaybo et al study of CCU managed by PA service
- From 1986-1988 PA ran service outcomes measured and compared to resident service outcomes
- Found no change in complications or LOS
- Most important factor that PA's were experienced and provided 3 months CCU training prior to study

Changing Demographics of Current PA Students

- Age of enrollment:
 - 58% enrollees in 2005 < 30 years old
 - >50% enrollees in 1993 > 30 years old
- Previous Medical Experience:
 - Enrollees in PA program from 1984-1993 > 56 months experience
 - Enrollees in PA Program in 2005 < 29 months previous experience

22nd Annual Report on Physician Assistant Education in the U.S., 2005-06

PAs in Specialties

- Demand for PAs in all specialties
 - Growing number of PAs in specialties
 - Growth of jobs in specialties expected to rise
- Physician expectation of PA autonomy among new graduates or PAs changing fields
 - Patient load
 - Patient care
 - Specific skills
 - Research
 - Lack of mentorship/orientation



Should Every PA Who is Considering Specializing Participate in Postgraduate Training?

Absolutely Not!

- Postgraduate Residencies/Fellowships are an option *not* an ultimatum
- Created to assist PAs who desire additional training and education in a particular specialty within a short period of time
- Residencies/Fellowships serve to meet an individual's professional goals and objectives
 - Postgraduate education is not for everyone—it requires the right "fit"

What Characteristics Does a Successful PA Resident/Fellow Posses?

- Self-Discipline
- Self-Motivation
- Passion about the specialty
- Eagerness to Learn
 - Desires additional education
 - Enjoys academia and research
- Wants exposure to multiple styles of practice
- Desires confidence in decision making and developing skill subsets specific to the specialty



Qualified Applicants: A Co-Director's Perspective

- Excellent Student
 - GPA \geq 3.4
- Master's Degree or higher
- Routinely goes "above and beyond" on projects and assignments
- Involved in both academic and philanthropic organizations
- Outstanding Letters of Recommendation
 - Comment on maturity, professionalism, intellectual ability, motivation, ability to work with others, flexibility/ability to adapt, and personal integrity
- Personal Statement
- Complete Application
- NCCPA board certified or eligible
- State licensure or eligible
- ACLS/BLS certified



Expected Goals of Graduates of Postgraduate Programs

- Confidence
 - Self
 - Depth of Knowledge
 - Diagnostic Ability
 - Skills
 - Autonomy
 - Determine own style of practice
- Educate
 - PAs, Patients, Residents
- Realization of Career/ Professional Goals
 - Unique Employment Opportunities
 - Professional Growth
 - Scholarly activity
- Mentorship



From Classroom to Residency...How to Identify Qualified Candidates



- A desire to practice in a specialty/sub-specialty
- Seek more specialized, "expert" training that they can apply to their future practice
- Demonstrate an interest in scholarship, academics, professional growth
- Clinical experience vs. limited clinical experience

From Classroom to Residency...How to Direct Qualified Candidates



- Midwestern University Physician Assistant Program
 - 86 master's-level students in each matriculating class
 - 4 master's track options: research, education, bioethics and clinical
 - Students in the clinical track select a specific specialty/sub-specialty to emphasize throughout the course of their training

From Classroom to Residency...How to Direct Qualified Candidates



- Midwestern University Physician Assistant Program
 - Students develop a portfolio of activities related to their chosen specialty field (i.e. CME, certifications, journal clubs, presentations, case reports, etc.)
 - Faculty encourage students with an interest in postgraduate residencies/fellowships to pursue scholarly works (i.e. posters, publications, etc.)

Utilizing Alumni to Meet Student Professional Goals



- Identify student/graduate candidates
- Develop networks between programs, residencies and fellowships
- Communicate
- Facilitate rotation opportunities during the clinical year

Benefits to Working with Alumni Involved in Postgraduate Training



- Clear understanding of the goals and objectives of the PA program
- Opportunity for rotation sites
 - Enhances educational opportunities for the program
 - Allows postgraduate program and perspective PA student applicants to become familiar with each other
- Alumni available to students for mentorship and as a resource for information on postgraduate training or specialty practice
- PA program faculty and postgraduate program faculty may collaborate on academic and/or research projects for "scholarly environment"

● ● Conclusions

- Opportunities for PAs in specialties is growing
- PA positions, especially in an academic setting, are requiring autonomy
- Postgraduate residencies/fellowships provide and *option* for creating confidence and skill subsets in specialty medicine
- Postgraduate training is not for everyone—it is individually driven
- PA program faculty can identify and direct qualified students to postgraduate training
- Alumni, particularly those involved in postgraduate training programs, can be an asset to the PA program
 - Increase educational opportunities for students
 - Resourceful
- PA program and postgraduate programs may collaborate on research/academic endeavors

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