

December 2014



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# Bridging the Gap

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**Converting a rotation  
into an employment  
offer**

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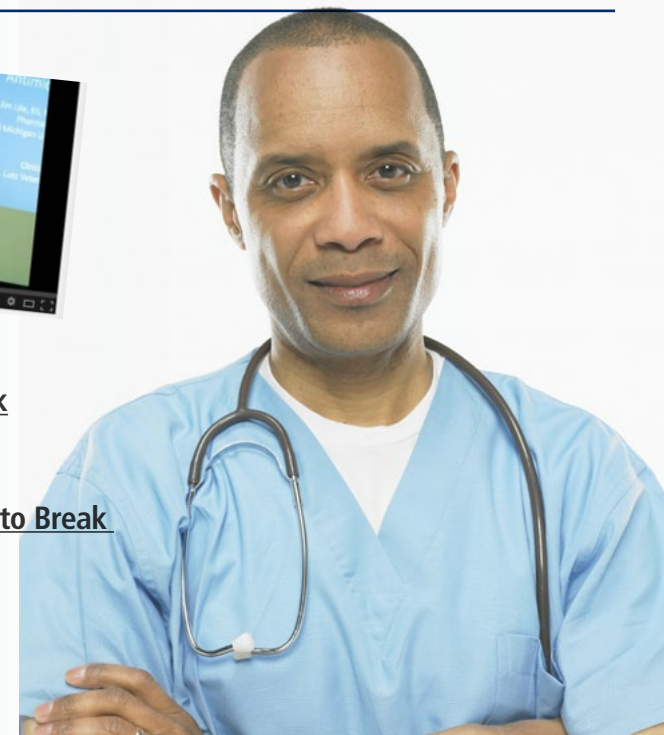
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## President's Message

**G**reetings! I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who attended our 40th Anniversary Gala & Fall Conference at the Grand Traverse Resort in October. We had an amazing turnout with nearly 600 registrants; our biggest conference yet! YOU showed up in full force and we appreciate your support and continued membership! It was a great conference and I truly thank you for celebrating with us!

As President of the Academy and more importantly a member of MAPA, I am proud of what a great practice state we have as Physician Assistants. With my last article I talked about how I got involved with MAPA and why. Now I'd like to focus on you and how you can get involved with MAPA. There's a saying "If we don't have a seat at the table we might be on the menu!" We hear daily about the shortage of providers for the underserved patients of Michigan and I can tell you that the legislators are looking for a quick solution to this dilemma. Unfortunately, it may not be the right answer for us. It's imperative

*"If we don't have a seat at the table we might be on the menu!"*

that when the lawmakers are making decisions that affect policy and patient care, that we are part of the conversation. In short, if we aren't advocating for PAs, no one else will. I urge you to get involved and participate in YOUR future; together we can make a difference! I realize that work, family and other life stressors can get in the way and as a board we sometimes struggle to stay on task as well. We are all busy...plain and simple; I get that. However, when we graduated from PA school we ALL took an oath, THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT OATH and it may differ from program to program but the fundamental principles are the same. In short, we pledged to take care of patients! The oath talks about knowledge and responsibility and working with a physician team, not to betray confidences and understand your limitations as a provider.

I know it may seem daunting or easy to pass the buck and expect that someone else is going to do the work for us. MAPA is here to do that but without your ACTIVE participation in MAPA none of these things will matter. I don't expect that after you read this my phone and email will be flooded asking for a position on the board. Don't get me wrong, I WOULD LOVE THAT PROBLEM, but instead I am asking that you

follow through on your commitment to MAPA. You're a member and I thank you, but now I'm asking you to give a little a time to protect your future! Your input matters to me and is invaluable when it comes to advocacy for our profession. You can get involved by participating in a conference call, recruit a non-member, attending a MAPA board or regional meeting or simply contacting your legislator and educating them on what a PA does for the patients of Michigan. I am asking for you to stand up for our profession because no one else will. I continue to ask you to ADVOCATE for our profession or we WILL be left out of the discussions that affect patient care. As a Physician Assistant we took an oath to care for our patients and do what's right for them. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and our profession. I am proud of being a physician assistant and I hope you are too! Please feel free to contact me for questions or ways to get involved.

Sincerely,

Heather N. Klopp, PA-C

MAPA President

# Bridging the Gap

By: Marcos A. Vargas, MSHA, PA-C

You may be astonished to find out how easy it is to turn a clinical rotation into a job offer. Astute clinicians begin planning their careers while they're still in school and there's no better time than when you're rotating through a particular rotation, to make your "mark" rather than wait until after your graduation. So why not start planting the seeds now, before you're forgotten and/or lost in the shuffle. It's easier than you think, especially if you're willing to do several things for yourself while uncovering would-be employer essential information.

As in a regular job search, you need to exercise professionalism and educate yourself on the position you are interested in. Thus, researching the practice early will help you transition into your first job. In this article, you'll learn six tips that will give you that edge you need and are looking for, in order to land that coveted job you are seeking.

## Tip # 1: Be Engaged:

Let your mentor

know that as a student, you are willing to participate, learn and contribute from all case presentations, instead of being a passive selective observant. Demonstrate a memorable picture of yourself by showing a willingness and driven disposition at all times. How? By being actively involved in your rotation, even in the trivial aspects of any case. Always express and remind your preceptor of

your "availability" even beyond what's commonly assigned or expected for a student in the clinical rotation. Maintain a highly visible profile and presence at all times and be engaged and show a genuine interest.

## Tip # 2: Be Inclusive (not

**choosey):** Let's say emergency medicine appeals to you, but not doing lumbar punctures per se. This type of exclusive thinking can torpedo

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# Bridging the Gap

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your chances or as some would say, this would be the “kiss of death.” If you were to vocalize such disinterest or infer it to a preceptor during the rotation, the preceptor will remember and this will hurt your chances of a job offer at this site. You have to develop the attitude and mindset that you want to learn every skill possible for that particular rotation. Remember, do not disqualify yourself from potential consideration nor from building your skill set early in the rotation. The more varied your skill set is, the more marketable you make yourself.

## Tip # 3: Be Transparent:

Confidence is being aware and assured in your abilities and limitations of your recall memory when responding to “pimped questions” by the mentor. Even unintended non-malicious deceptiveness never bodes well with hiring potential employees. Truthfully, it is always best to say *‘you do not know the answer but would do your best effort to research the answer’* to the question posed, rather than guess at

the answer. You will – definitely – be more respected if you know and accept your limitations. Not knowing is not a “crime” nor a sign of “weakness” as many would want you to believe or make it seem.

## Tip # 4: Be Grateful:

Be mindful and thankful of everyone you came in contact with during the rotation, including: administrative staff, ancillary clinical staff, housekeeping, operators, etc. Not extending your gratitude for their time and/or effort in assisting you in your development is not only inconsiderate, but the surest way to fall out of favor if an opportunity ever presented itself in the form of a job offer. A few handwritten ‘thank you’ cards can be viewed as a self-less gesture and a token of sincerity that invariably always set a very positive note in their eyes. You are never sure of where a positive review of your skills, patient care or knowledge can be had from a rotation; which can help lead to a potential job offer from that site.

## Tip # 5: Be Professional:

Because today’s healthcare workers are increasingly hurried – because so much is expected of them, and patients require or demand quality health care — it can lead to abruptness or stressful situations, making you become impatient with other healthcare workers and more importantly- with patients. So remember, we’re all humans and occasionally can have an “off day” at work. The key here is to treat everyone courteously and respectfully as you would like to be treated yourself. By doing this you may be showing cultural sensitivity and a high degree of maturity that very few can match. In other words, befriending people makes you a standout in the minds of those whose path you crossed, even if they meant no ill will towards you then.

## Tip # 6: Be Proactive:

Be mindful of the practice cultural values, strengths and weaknesses and place them in perspective, especially if you would like to consider this rotation

as a job once your studies have been completed. It’s ok to show your interest in returning back as an “employee” at this site. You can express this during the end of the rotation to different team members, key preceptor and/or hiring authorities. Plant the seed before leaving by asking if they would consider hiring somebody with your background and personality profile. You may submit a resume, but only if allowed and welcomed; you wouldn’t want to come across as an uninvited guest that every family has during the holiday season. Be prepared to explain in 30 seconds or less your desire to join the group, but more so, how would you *‘fit in’* in this workplace. More importantly, how they would benefit from hiring you instead of someone else. This always seem to be the biggest question in the prospective employer’s mind, and the largest hurdle to overcome for new graduates, especially if they aren’t aware of these job-landing career tips.

# MAPA and You

By Marcos A. Vargas, MSHA, PA-C



**A**s a PA student or newly minted PA, you may be wondering how will your career unfold. What industry career challenges might you face? Or, How can you keep up with the latest trends and regulatory issues in the Healthcare industry? Or, what employment landscape will you be facing when entering the workforce, etc? Needless to say, having the answers to these questions is no easy task. Particularly if you didn't have a crystal ball. But who says you need a crystal ball?

MAPA is your crystal ball and more. We are here to guide you and provide you with professional support to your most pressing career questions and/or needs. Without a doubt there is no better resource to have at your fingertips than this premier organization that has eagerly helped many PA colleagues build and sustain their careers over the past 40 years.

By becoming a student member or a fellow member, you will make a difference in your professional life for years to come. MAPA will keep you current and relevant with clear up-to-date practical practicing information. All just by networking with your peers across the continuum of

medical practices in the state. You will also have the opportunity either to acquire, develop or hone your administrative leadership skills by serving in any capacity you choose with the MAPA Board of Directors, much like I did in 2011-13 when I served as Region V Rep. Not only does this commitment look good in your resume, but your involvement will secure your professional livelihood while giving you invaluable experiences to augment your skills set beyond imagination.



Still hesitating about joining? Then ponder about this question if nothing else. What other organization would have your best interest at heart? Hands down... again MAPA is dedicated to assist you meet your career goals by being your voice, your advocate and your representative partner making sure that you are heard, that you are considered and your needs continuously met. Simply, there is no limit to your future career success. Get a head start on a rich and rewarding bright future -- as a MAPA member of course. You will see and experience firsthand the career-enhancing difference. I give you my word!

# Legislative Update – Looking Forward

By Ron X. Stavale, PA-C, Chair, MAPA Legislative Committee, rxvalle@yahoo.com

Some of you may be aware that Senate Bill 2 (the Nurse Practitioner Independent Practice Bill) passed the Michigan Senate earlier this year by a marginal vote of 20-18. The bill had two amendments voted onto it that we believe are not palatable to the goals of nurses. It is now in the Michigan House of Representatives Health Policy Committee. MAPA is keeping an eye on any legislative issue involving health care, but especially this bill. It will be scheduled for an informal hearing in September; and if by chance it were to pass the House, it would then need to come back to the Senate, which placed the amendments on it. There are no guarantees in this business, but what we can tell you is that the professional organization that represents and advocates for you, MAPA, will be there!

Last year, MAPA's Executive Director- Mike DeGrow and I explained to Senator Jansen (the sponsor of Senate Bill 2), that there are many mixed practices in the state of Michigan, which employ both PAs and NPs. This creates a scenario where PAs and NPs would function under different regulatory bodies and have different practice abilities; while performing the same

work in the same practice and sometimes on the same patient on the same day and would only worsen the confusion that occurs between our professions. Currently, the differences between PAs and NPs are on: safety restraints, prescribing physical therapy, rounding in hospitals, and prescribing scheduled II medications in the outpatient setting and upon discharge from the hospital. Part of these differences are due to MAPA's work with Public Act 210, which the nurses chose not to be included on. There is also a limited number of PAs that a physician can delegate prescriptive rights to, where there are no restrictions for physicians delegating to NPs.

**MAPA supported Senate Bill 568**, sponsored by Senator Marleau, which created a professional landscape, mirroring our goal of not leaving Michigan PAs professionally disadvantaged and eliminating the differences between PAs and NPs practicing in Michigan. If Senate Bill 2 passes, then NPs would be in a situation where they would require less bureaucratic regulation, especially in hospitals and emergency rooms. MAPA is very concerned of the potential 'knee jerk' reaction by hospitals and practices of hiring more NPs, because of less bureaucratic responsibility.



**Senate Bill 568 acknowledged that PAs and NPs practice in Michigan and that there should be one governing body overseeing and regulating the practice of medicine.**

SB 568- while visionary would have created a lot of change that gave pause from the medical societies

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and nursing. Currently, there are several *'irons in the fire'* and Senate Bill 568 is not dead, but it is treading water fairly well in the Senate. SB 568 was an enormous bill that affected MDs, DOs, podiatrists, PAs, and NPs and it is hopeful that some aspects of this enormous bill will be applied to future legislation.

**What is most important to MAPA** is for us to know how you, our colleagues, feel on these critical issues. As your chosen leaders, we sincerely need to know how you want to shape the future of your profession in Michigan. Do you think that Nurse Practitioners independence would put you (as a PA) in a disadvantaged position? Do you think that if NPs become independent, that PAs should also? For the past couple of years, I have been passing out surveys to MAPA members and non-MAPA member PAs at pharmaceutical dinners, hospital meetings and even up to Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Here are some of the results: Overwhelmingly, **264 out of 265 PAs surveyed feel that there needs to be a professional organization representing their professional interests in Michigan!** Ok, that's a mandate if I ever saw one! It is quite clear that PAs believe that there needs to be a professional organization, like MAPA, in Michigan. So how do we shape such an organization? Next, **88% of the PAs surveyed feel that MAPA's efforts over the last 15 years have improved their practice environment!** No one would trade 15 years of MAPA dues and have to go back and practice as we did in 1998... no one! This survey did include PAs who have only been in practice for a couple years, so I would expect that this result would even be higher with PAs who have practicing for many years. Finally, **80% of responders knew that if MAPA dissolved- due to lack of membership, that AAPA would not come into Michigan and take over MAPA's responsibilities.** What AAPA would do is become involved when legislation negatively affected our PA profession in

Michigan and would sit down with concerned PAs and help create an organization to represent Michigan PAs... and what would it look like? It would look like the MAPA that you have now and yes... you would end up recreating MAPA, but not until after something negative happened to your ability to practice medicine in Michigan; which would not likely be overturned in your professional lifetime! No one wants to recreate the wheel, especially when your professional life and personal time is involved. So, **HELP US TO HELP YOU!**

MAPA is made up of your colleagues who practice medicine just like you. We are volunteers that work to protect and improve your practice environment in Michigan. The people who make up the MAPA BOD still work in practices on a daily basis and have a passion to continue to secure a PA-friendly work environment in Michigan for **all PAs**. Our survey shows that Michigan PAs believe that [MAPA] is necessary; **so why do our membership numbers remain low?** Without you membership support and involvement in MAPA, the safeguards of your ability to practice medicine in Michigan can erode. MAPA does not only advocate for its members, we are steadfast and vigilant for **ALL PAs** in Michigan; your membership in MAPA supports this ideal.

MAPA is available to answer your questions on critically important legislative, licensing or reimbursement issues. We are able to assist you in any work related issues that come up in your practice. MAPA sponsors one of the best CME programs in the country with over 500 attendees! We are not big enough, nor do we have enough volunteers or money, to put out a glossy 40 page newsletter every quarter; we cannot offer you discounts with Expedia or with Ford Motor Company. What we can do is make you and your colleagues more valuable to your practice, your patients and your family! Don't just talk the talk... walk the walk! Work with us to maintain and improve our practice environment in Michigan.



# PAMPAC Donations at Work

The Physician Assistants of Michigan Political Action Committee (PAMPAC) is a voluntary, non-profit, unincorporated association operating as a separate, segregated fund of the Michigan Academy of Physician Assistants. It is not affiliated with any political party and it is not affiliated with or a subsidiary of any other political action committee, or of any other national, state, or local academy or association of physician assistants.

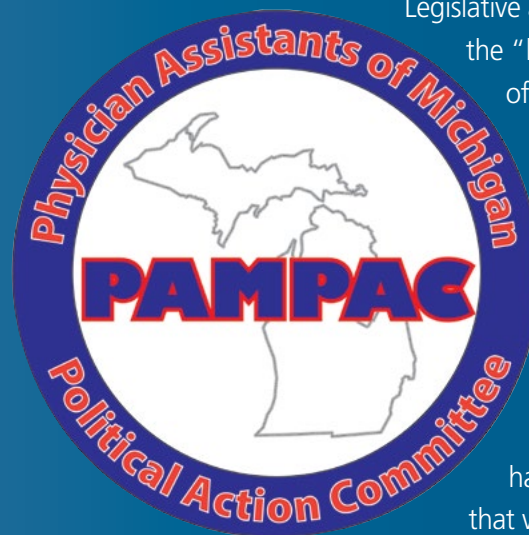
PAMPAC was active this year in fundraising and then contributing to candidates who MAPA has identified as being potential supporters of the Physician Assistant profession in Michigan and who may be or have been on health related committees in the Michigan Senate or House.

This fall our main fundraising was done at the Fall Conference in Traverse City at the Grand Traverse Resort. We had a booth set up just outside the main entrance to the exhibit hall. We hosted a reception on Thursday evening of the conference, at which donations were accepted also. The Board of Trustees of PAMPAC would like to thank all those who contributed at the conference and we were able to raise over \$6000 during the conference.

With these donations, PAMPAC was able to support several candidates this election cycle that was just completed. Dr. Edward Canfield was given a contribution from us in his campaign for the State House of Representatives seat in Huron and Tuscola Counties. We are happy to report that on November 4, 2014 he won his election. We expect that he will be appointed to the House Health Policy Committee. PAMPAC also supported Margaret O'Brien and she won the 20th District Senate seat in the Kalamazoo area. She was in the House and served on the House Health Policy Committee and there is a good possibility that she will be appointed to the Senate Health Policy Committee.

This year's election is over, but fundraising usually is on-going, especially in the House, where the elected term is only two years versus four years in the Senate.

Plus, where term limits are opening up seats, the new contenders start earlier and earlier in their fundraising.



Legislative activity will be starting up again in the "lame duck session" before the first of the year and then when the new legislators are seated. Senate Bill 2 may be discussed this year or if not will probably be reintroduced in the new legislature. This SB 2 is the Nurse Practitioner independent practice bill that would not require them to collaborate with a physician. MAPA has also supported Senate Bill 568 that would make changes to our current controlling legislation.

So you can see that PAMPAC, MAPA's lobbyist- Mike DeGrow, along with MAPA's Legislative Chair- Ron X. Stavale, PA-C continue to need your support through contributions and also with contacts that you have with your legislators. You can attend their fundraisers and keep in contact with them about issues that you are concerned about, especially those that affect your practice.

If you would like to donate to PAMPAC, the mailing address is PAMPAC, 1390 Eisenhower Place, Ann Arbor, MI 48108. If you have any questions or suggestions, you can reach me by e-mail at [VaughnPAC@aol.com](mailto:VaughnPAC@aol.com) or by phone at (989) 686-0578.

*Vaughn Begick, PA-C*  
PAMPAC Chair



# Do you have what it takes to break into the business?

By Marcos A. Vargas, MSHA, PA-C

**A**s a newly minted PA, you may be wondering how fair prospective employers' will be to your quest when seeking employment opportunities. By the same token they probably would wonder if you have what it takes to break in & adjust from the (protected) academic environment to the real world.

So what exactly are most if not all prospective PA employers looking for when gauging employment readiness straight out of school? Mostly are what insiders call nowadays "soft skills." Rest assured these skills are highly valued and sought after. Many interview questions will be geared to uncover them during the interview process to see how well rounded you are. Herein, are listed those

entry-level skills, traits and attributes most employers seek out when hiring:

- Verifiable contemporaneous academic training with strong clinical rotations performance references.
- Demonstrable strong written & oral Communication skills.
- Personal adaptability / good organizational fit—ability to work well with others, including superiors, subordinates and peers alike.
- Cultural diversity sensitivity when dealing with staff or patients of different ethnographic groups or backgrounds.
- Professional career objectives that mesh with those of the organization

or group practice. A strong sense and commitment to professional growth/development (CME). Not just collecting a paycheck & being another payroll number.

- Dependability, maturity, integrity and strong professional work ethic in prior jobs. In other words, confidence coupled with competence. Today, a good scholastic record is no longer the entry passport it once was with most employers. In fact, you must show them you "got what it takes" with well thought out factual past examples during your interview responses.

# Start



# How to get published in MAPA's Newsletter

By Marcos A. Vargas, MSHA, PA-C

Wondering if you could get published in our newsletter? Wonder no more because we are a writer-friendly publication. Not only that, it's easier than you might think...if you follow a few simple guidelines while putting pen to paper. Here they are:

1. We like/prefer both clinical and non-clinical articles. Regarding clinical articles, let's say we aren't interested in long academic reviews nor extremely technical topics only relevant to specialty PA practices, nor dissertations on rare or exotic diseases. Ideally 1-3 pages in length / double spaced. These can include, but not only limited to these topics:
  - a. Recertification tips based on personal experiences, etc.
  - b. Case studies with a self-critique of how a case was initially mismanaged.
  - c. Practice clinical pearls you have acquired and/or refined.
  - d. Treatment and diagnoses-oriented articles.
2. Regarding Non-clinical Articles we would welcome letters, opinions, essays, book reviews, plus also, career and/or mentoring article types, even special reports, medico-legal issues, performance improvement, etc.

Getting published should not be an exhausting quest or traumatizing quest for a byline. Even if you've never had a prior line in print or are familiar with APA formatting. As long as you can type and produce a manuscript in MS Word 2003 we got you covered. It is that simple - leave the work to us and we will do the rest. So give it some consideration and don't delay any further, because we're here for you. You're invited to query or submit your piece to: [maravarpac@hotmail.com](mailto:maravarpac@hotmail.com)

Cordially yours,

Your MAPA's newsletter editor and editorial staff



## In Case You Wondered...No Facelift Here!

Yes, you read correctly – a new editor listed in the masthead. I will be assuming the editorship of our newsletter, and I'm very pleased and delighted to have been recognized and selected to serve your readership needs. Under the direction of the MAPA Board of Directors and our President-Elect, Mr. Chris Noth, PA-C, I hope and will strive to carry seamlessly the duties of this post – a post that he elevated to new heights when he took the reins.

As many of you already know, our former editor Mr. Noth was and has been involved on many fronts/projects with MAPA. As he is transitioning himself from this post and in that same spirit and fervor, he will be undertaking further additional challenges and new

responsibilities when he assumes his new leadership post in the spring.

So let me be explicit, and get to the point: in case you are wondering, rest assured there will be no anticipated monumental newsletter changes. Oftentimes when there is a change of editor, a radical publication makeover follows. For the most part this signals differing editorial perspectives, styles, etc.

But why tinker with a newsletter's mission and vision? One that has been complimented for its bold colors, easy reading tone, relevant content. One with real-life practical tools and tips that you can always incorporate into your practice

In sum, you remain our focus and even though we might be going through "the changing of the guard," so to speak, MAPA and I hope to preserve the look and feel that makes us so unique compared to other state chapter newsletters, to deliver that excellence, and to project and convey that timely feeling in every single installment. I hope that if you ever feel we do not measure to your expectations, you will let us know. After all, just in case you wondered...no facelift here!

*Marcos A. Vargas, MSHA, PA-C*  
MAPA Newsletter Editor

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## MAPA PLANNER

EVENTS/CONFERENCES



### Future MAPA CME Conferences

- 2015 Baronette Renaissance, Novi (March 20-21)
- 2015 Grand Traverse Resort & Spa (Oct. 8 - 11)
- 2016 Grand Traverse Resort & Spa (Oct. 13 - 16)
- 2017 Amway Grand, Grand Rapids (Oct. 5 - 8)
- 2018 Grand Traverse Resort & Spa (Oct. 4 - 7)