

UA

PA

# The Stone Crier

Winter 2017



## President's Message

Richard D. Ulstad, MS, PA-C, CCD

Yes, 2017 is upon us! Welcome friends, families, colleagues, students and providers everywhere. Now that the election is finally over, and the bickering and name calling from both sides is hopefully over, we can now find a moment of respite and attempt to anticipate what will be in store for health-care.

This past year has gone by fast. Physician assistants, like the general public may have mixed feelings about the presidential election outcome. But nonetheless, for example, the Median Access and Chip Reauthorization Act (MACRA) is in effect as of January 2017, even though its bipartisan fate remains unknown. A growing percentage of provider payment is to be based on value, and quality, not on volume.

Our UAPA is a vital source of this learning, connection, inspiration, and enjoyment as we advance through our careers and into retirement, years or decades down the road. Whether you are in the first quarter or the fourth quarter of your career, we are all part of an extraordinary network of people connected with the UAPA. This is a formative time for our UAPA community, and we have the opportunity to build stronger relationships of mutual benefit to each other and the UAPA.

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For a physician assistant, managing a career with successful aging requires adapting to an environment that's changing at an increasingly rapid rate, as well as recognizing and capitalizing on the opportunities these changes afford; and rarely can we do this alone. Rather we need the council and help of mentors.

This issue of UAPA's The Stone Crier – Winter Newsletter coincides with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of our profession, which has made mentoring a top priority. What inspires me most is the desire to make an impact. Experts seem to predict a major transformation in the next ten years toward a more consumer based healthcare; patients are going to want to connect with their provider on an as needed basis — they want interaction and they want it now — on their terms. This requires providers to adapt their approaches to accessibility, scheduling, processes and communication towards an optimal patient experience. And even then, from a patient's perspective, however, no one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care! Empathy, sympathy, and compassion appear to be evolving as the core backbone convictions defining our profession for years to come.

While our diagnostic skills will never be overlooked, it is the day to day life moments as a PA which will allow us to excel and truly be cognizant of the good work we provide.

As we venture into 2017, as urological providers, we must be aware of our strengths and weaknesses, as a PA, as a practice, as an organization, and as leaders of our profession. We must strive for personal life balance, better patient outcomes, and continue to be a voice for healthcare growth, nurturing values, morals, and quality of life for each other, while not compromising quality of care for our patients.

I will finish by alluding to the words of Anne Bradstreet, an English American writer, a notable American poet, and the first woman to be published in Colonial America, "Authority without wisdom is like a heavy axe without an edge, fitter to bruise than polish."

Take care, and see you in Vegas! Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Rick  
Richard D. Ulstad, MS, PA-C, CCD  
2016 – 2017 UAPA President

## Program Chair Message

G. Brooke Zilinskas, MMS, PA-C



This year's UAPA 6th Annual Meeting will take place at newly renovated Tropicana Las Vegas – a DoubleTree by Hilton in Las Vegas, Nevada from March 31 to April 2, 2017. We are excited to offer such a quality CME with returning speakers like Dr. Vitaly Margulis, Brad Horberger, PA-C, and Todd Duran, PA-C. The program committee has also been working hard to add some new opportunities to this year's conference. We hope you will get excited about panel presentations where

our presenting faculty will discuss specific cases and field other questions from the audience. We will offer panel discussions in oncology and BPH, as well as, incontinence. We are also working to include opportunities for professional development in the form of a contract negotiation lecture and a breakout session for resume building. Please bring your current resume or CV to this breakout session along with your questions for edits and professional advancement. If you have ever wondered how to start giving lectures, getting involved in research, teaching, etc, this is a great place to attend. We are also hoping our experienced providers will be there to share their professional experiences and create a foundation of mentoring the next generation of health care providers.

Finally at this year's UAPA conference, we will be offering a moderated podium session where attendees can bring an interesting case, a unique topic, or an interesting method of patient care and present it to our supporting group of members. *Please apply for this opportunity.* It will require a five to eight minute presentation with PowerPoint slides about your topic followed by questions asked from the moderator and the audience. This is not an opportunity to be "grilled under the spotlight," but rather a chance to teach others about a topic that may not always be covered in a formal lecture, give everyone who is interested a chance to present, and make this UAPA conference the most interactive one yet!

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us in Las Vegas at the UAPA 6th Annual Meeting!

It's an amazing opportunity to learn, present, network, and enjoy yourself!

G. Brooke Zilinskas, MMS, PA-C  
2016 – 2017 UAPA Program Chair

## Featured UAPA Members

Heidi Felton, MPAS, PA-C



**Q:** What first sparked your interest in becoming a urology PA?

**A:** I was in my last semester of my Bachelor's degree in a cardiac rehab internship. I was intending on going to physical therapy school. During that internship, I was able to observe a few heart surgeries. I was intrigued by the girl across from the surgeon who was clearly not another surgeon but also not a surgical tech. After the third procedure, I finally asked her, "what are you?" A few

weeks later I was looking into PA schools and filling out the CASPA! I'm so grateful that God allowed my path to cross with that PA because prior to that encounter, I didn't even know this was an occupation!

**Q:** What is your biggest accomplishment since you have become a PA?

**A:** My biggest accomplishment is what I have been able to do with my profession outside of my every day job. One of the most appealing things to me about being a provider was the endless opportunities I would have to serve on mission trips around the world. I was able to help out a mission team that was heading to Honduras and had just lost their doctor who was overseeing the medical arm of the mission team due to a family emergency. It was one of the best things I have done by far!

**Q:** How has the field changed since you first entered it?

**A:** In the five years I have been a PA, awareness and acceptance of the profession has grown immensely. I feel like more patients are not only willing but are actually happy to see the PA. Doctors are also realizing the great benefit of having mid-level providers in their office, and thus, the profession is growing.

**Q:** How do you see the role of the PA in urology changing in the future?

**A:** I hope that PAs are able to continue to expand their scope within the urology profession. I know a lot of PAs get to do many urologic office procedures, assist in the OR, and see a wide range of patients in the clinic. I hope this becomes the normal across the country.

**Q:** What is the most satisfying part of your job?

**A:** Happy and appreciative patients are always a good reminder of the good we get to do as PAs. It is nice to see how merely spending time with a patient and showing some compassion can change a patient's outlook on an otherwise scary diagnosis. I also truly love that I work in an office with multiple PAs. Having someone else to bounce ideas off of and who knows what you're going through on the bad days is such a blessing. I highly recommend new grads find a practice with another PA, preferably one that has at least a little experience and is willing to share their pearls of wisdom. I never would have made it through the first year or two without my colleague!

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UA  
PA

UROLOGICAL ASSOCIATION  
OF  
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

**2016 – 2017**

### OFFICERS

**President:** Richard D. Ulstad, MS, PA-C, CCD

**President-Elect:** Jessica Nelson, MPAS, PA-C

**Vice President:** Thomas McBride, PA-C

**Secretary:** Heidi Turpen, MPAS, PA-C

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**Past President:** Charlene Kreiensieck, MPAS, PA-C

### DELEGATE TO THE AAPA HOD

Wanda C. Hancock, MHSA, PA-C

### AUA REPRESENTATIVE

Open Position

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Heather Swanson

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**DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION** for the UAPA Board of Directors? Please submit any questions to Heather Swanson at [heather@wjweiser.com](mailto:heather@wjweiser.com) for inclusion in the UAPA Newsletter.

Q: What is the background and history of your practice?

A: The practice first opened in the 1980s by Dr. Coles. It was initially known as Alaska Southcentral Urology Specialists. The practice continued to grow, and in 2006, a pediatric urologist and the first PA joined the clinic. That PA is still here too! Shortly thereafter, the clinic name was changed to Alpine Urology. About two and a half years ago, our office joined with a urology clinic in a neighboring city and collectively we became Alaska Urology. We now have nine doctors and four PAs. Doctors travel out monthly to conduct clinics in remote areas of Alaska as well.

Q: When did you start at your current practice?

A: I started in 2011, right after graduation. It was my first job, and to be honest, I figured I would do it for a year or two for a couple reasons. 1) I wasn't convinced I would like urology, and 2) we only planned to stay in Alaska for two years. But here I am, over five years later, and I still love the field and Alaska.

Q: What do you like most about your practice?

A: The people I work with are great! I also love that I get to dabble in surgery from time to time. It breaks up the monotony of clinic that sometimes occurs.

Q: What is your favorite thing about attending the UAPA Annual Meeting?

A: This is absolutely my favorite conference to attend because EVERY session is applicable to me as a PA. It is also the best networking opportunity because not only are all the attendees in your field, but they are also mid-level providers. It is always good to hear how other people run clinic and deal with different challenges we all face.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



**UAPA 6th Annual Meeting**  
**March 31 – April 2, 2017**  
Tropicana Las Vegas – A DoubleTree By Hilton  
Las Vegas, Nevada

*For more details and online registration please visit:  
[www.uapanet.org/](http://www.uapanet.org/)*

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