



# physician assistant SPOTLIGHT

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

WINTER 2017

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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@wisc.edu](mailto:paprogram@wisc.edu)  
[physicianassistant.wisc.edu](http://physicianassistant.wisc.edu)

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## Hearing the Whispers

Patient video teaches PAs about ovarian cancer symptoms

**L**aura Hansen wants you to know that ovarian cancer is not, as some may say, a “silent” killer. Rather, it’s a disease that whispers.

Hansen spoke about her experiences with the disease in a recent UW–Madison Physician Assistant (PA) Program Cases of Patients video.

Her story, she hopes, will help teach PAs to hear ovarian cancer’s whispers—so it can be detected earlier.



**Above:** Laura Hansen speaks to PA students in a Cases of Patients video. **Watch the full video at:** [go.wisc.edu/j775a0](http://go.wisc.edu/j775a0)

### Know the ‘BEAT’

To help PA students remember the common symptoms of ovarian cancer, Hansen shared the BEAT mnemonic, which stands for:

- B** = bloating and bleeding
- E** = eating (GI issues and gas)
- A** = abdominal pain or pressure
- T** = tinkle (urinary issues)

“There are a cluster of symptoms that patients experience at the beginning of the illness,” she noted in the video. “Early detection is crucial.”

She then recounted her journey, starting with those symptoms and continuing through surgery, chemotherapy, eight years of remission—and in 2013, recurrence.

*Continues on page 2*

## 'Whispers,' continued

Hansen also recalled how Lori Seaborne, MPAS, PA-C, and Joanne Rash, PA-C, helped her navigate tests, understand options and make decisions.

"With Lori and Joanne...on my side, I know I'm safe," she reflected. "Their wisdom and their compassion have made a huge difference on this journey. They have helped me to cope emotionally and physically—and to heal."

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**"You hold our lives in your hands, and we really appreciate it when you help us to be safe."**

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### Treating the Whole Patient

Hansen wants all PAs to know the value of seeing the patient as a whole. Doing so allows them to listen closely to all of the information—whispers and all.

"We want you to remember... that yes, you're treating illnesses, but you're treating the whole patient," she said. "You hold our lives in your hands, and we really appreciate it when you help us to be safe putting our lives there."

**Note:** *Laura Hansen died on November 30, 2016. Her family hopes this article will educate others on the importance of detecting ovarian cancer early.*

*The PA Program extends a heartfelt thanks to Laura and her family for their willingness to share her story with future PAs through the Cases of Patients series.*

**View the complete session at:**  
[go.wisc.edu/w6ux2h](http://go.wisc.edu/w6ux2h)

## Students, Alum Win WAPA Awards

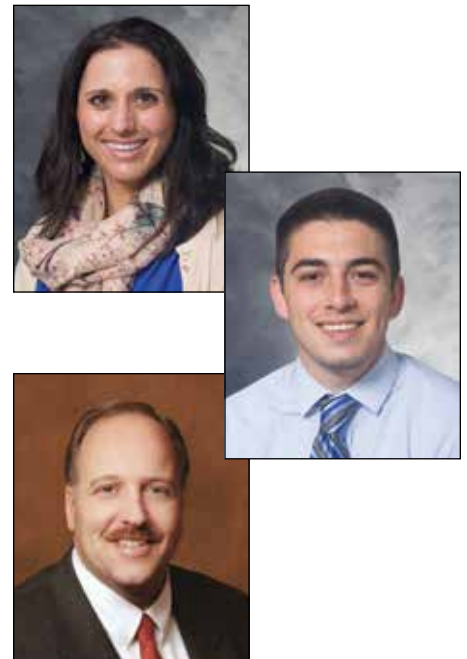
**C**ongratulations to UW–Madison PA Program students Miranda Zuhlke and Colton Skenandore, and alumnus Jeffrey Baranek, PA-C, who were honored at the Wisconsin Academy of Physician Assistants' (WAPA) annual banquet this October.

Zuhlke received the Paul S. Robinson Leadership award for exemplary leadership in her community and profession.

Skenandore, a member of the Oneida Nation, received the Norine Friell Service award for his contributions to Native American health care.

Baranek, a 1988 graduate who now practices at Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare in greater Milwaukee, received WAPA's top honor, the 2016 Physician Assistant of the Year Award.

**Read more at:** [go.wisc.edu/3301n3](http://go.wisc.edu/3301n3)



**Above, top to bottom:** *Miranda Zuhlke, Colton Skenandore and Jeffrey Baranek, PA-C*

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## Brett Palmer Named PAEA Future Educator Fellow

**T**he Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) selected UW–Madison PA Program student Brett Palmer as a 2016 Future Educator Fellow.

Palmer was one of 25 PA students from around the country participating in the two-day fellowship, held during the PAEA Education Forum in October.

The program focused on professional development, leadership, and mentorship for future PA educators. Palmer said that the PAEA and educators alike recognize the need to involve students in shaping the way PAs are trained.

"Even though most PA educators don't move into education until after at least a few years in practice, it's important to

expose students early on," he notes.

"I hope to be involved with PA education by being a preceptor, and working my way from there by doing guest lectures, helping with clinical skills, and eventually becoming a faculty member at a PA program."



**Above:** *Brett Palmer*

# Preceptor Q&A: David Murdy, MD

SSM Health



*Dr. Murdy is an internist at SSM Health Dean Medical Group in Janesville, Wisconsin, and has been a preceptor for 20 years.*

## Q: Why did you start precepting?

I had been a clinical preceptor for family medicine residents since prospected by a dean at the University of Wisconsin. I added PAs in my office practice 20 years ago. Both my patients and I enjoy and learn from the teaching effort, and I'm convinced it improves compliance and outcomes.

## Q: How many students do you usually teach in a given year?

I have three to four PA students from UW and other programs when available.

## Q: What skills do you focus on?

I practice in a group and focus on integrating clinical knowledge with difficult problems. I then have the students solve those problems, with my help, so they know how to care for the sick.

## Q: What do you enjoy most about precepting?

Teaching keeps me sharp, and the teaching process is shared with patients who come to a better understanding of their care.

## Q: What advice would you offer others considering precepting?

It is a great honor to teach and train those who come after us in this noble profession. It is critical for recruiting providers to help manage patient care demands.

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“It is a great honor to teach and train those who come after us in this noble profession.”

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# Kevin Wyne's 'Whomp-Whomp' Essay Wins DFMCH Award

**A** hilarious essay by Clinical Instructor Kevin Wyne, MPAS, MSc, PA-C, received a John Frey Writing Award for Prose from the UW Department of Family Medicine and Community Health (DFMCH).

In “Whomp-Whomp,” Wyne shares childhood memories of his mother, who loved and protected him with the “fierceness of a quality control expert at a nuclear power plant.”

He recalls being slathered in sunscreen, warned to “watch out for drive-by shootings” on a spring break trip to Nebraska, and counseled on the intimate details of cancer self-examination (during dinner, no less).

Her gifts to him have included bug spray, pepper spray, and bear spray; a foldable rope ladder; and a host of other survival equipment.

Wyne says his mother believes that preparing for the worst makes it less likely to happen. Certainly, it helps if bad things do happen.

That hand-crank emergency radio? Handy when the power went out. The winter car kit with reflective triangles? Useful when waiting for roadside assistance for a stalled car.

Throughout, Wyne recognizes his mother's anxieties as expressions of affection. Today, many of the emergency supplies sit unopened, but he can't bring himself to throw them out.

“And so they remain, ready for rapid deployment against the chaos of the world,” he writes, “a constant reminder of my mother's love in the face of uncertainty.”



**Above:** Kevin Wyne, MPAS, MSc, PA-C (on right), with John Frey, MD.

*The Frey Writing Awards honor John Frey, MD, past chair of the UW DFMCH, and recognize and encourage individual creative writing.*

**Read the full essay at: [go.wisc.edu/74q4kc](https://go.wisc.edu/74q4kc) (PDF, page 20)**



DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE AND COMMUNITY HEALTH  
**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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Name while a student: \_\_\_\_\_ Grad year: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Changes? Move? Name change? New email address? New job?**

What changed?  Name  Address  Practice  Email  Other

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