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PA Practice Bill Signed by Governor!

Submitted by Bonnie Shearer, MS, MPAS, PA-C

On May 22, 2009, the Governor signed into law the bill containing our statute changes. It will become affective ninety days after the Governor's signature (late August). The language making changes to the PA Practice Act was passed by the Nebraska Legislature as an amendment to LB195.

NAPA has been working on this proj-

ect for nearly four years after hearing complaints from members, physicians, and hospital administrators. We worked with multiple entities such as the Nebraska Medical Association, the Board of Medical Examiners, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), key legislative members, and the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA).

The main changes to the PA practice act include:

1. Supervising physicians will set standards of supervision for PAs with more than two years of experience. The DHHS had set standards that had become outdated and confusing in today's healthcare environment. PAs with less than two years of experience will have standards of supervision, yet to be determined, established in Regulations.

2. Credentialing of supervising physicians and their biennial fees eliminated.

3. Increased the number of PAs that one physician may supervise from two to four. Waivers to this ratio may still be sought.

4. Allow PAs to pronounce death and sign death certificates and other forms not otherwise prohibited by law.

5. Allows for only the PA's name to be on prescription labels unless the physician's name is needed for reimbursement reasons.

New regulations as well as a new Scope of Practice Agreement will have to be drafted to implement the changes to the law. NAPA has enlisted the aid of AAPA in these endeavors. Stay tuned for further developments and updates closer to the effective date which is September 29, 2009.

Spring CME Conference a Success!

*Submitted by Dara Schroeder, PA-C
NAPA CME Committee, Chairperson*

The 34th Annual NAPA Spring CME Conference & General Membership Meeting was held April 15-18th in Kearney, Nebraska. There were 288 in attendance with 174 of those being NAPA members, 9 non-members, and 105 students. This year we had 25 speakers providing lectures to

attendees with the ability to gain a possible 22 hours of Category I CME and 3.5 hours of Category II CME. Thank you to everyone who attended the conference. It was, once again, a very successful event!

Mark your calendars. The CME Committee is already working diligently to plan next year's Spring CME Conference to be held in Kearney on April 14-17, 2010.

2009 Scholarship Awardees



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This NAPA newsletter is being mailed to you as a courtesy of your colleagues and NAPA members. This is going out to ALL Nebraska PAs to inform you of important issues and networking opportunities.

Some Wins and Some Losses

Submitted by Jon Monk

As my year as President of NAPA draws to a close, I would like to thank the NAPA membership for giving me the chance to serve NAPA. It's been an honor to represent NAPA at meetings throughout the year. Although in some ways, I feel like I may be the Herbert Hoover (or Bill Callahan) of NAPA presidents.

I would like to say that this has been a completely successful year, but there have been some wins and losses during my term. So as a football team would do, it's time to look forward to a new coach, and next season.

We have suffered a defeat from Blue Cross, in reimbursement for our services. The decision was made before the game began, but our membership put forth a gallant effort. I would like to recognize all who wrote to the Blues and attended meetings. AAPA assisted us in the efforts by attending meetings, and by providing



Jon Monk, PA-C

information and statistics. I hope this isn't a pattern that other insurers will be following, but I fear this may be the beginning of the tidal wave.

We also suffered some financial setbacks with our investments. Due to our conservative investments, we have fared better than the average in the stock market. The economy as a whole has been rocky, as we all know. The change in Pharma regulations has adversely affected the revenue generated by the Spring CME in Kearney. For those who attended the conference, it was quite apparent in the exhibit room. Gone were the pens, clocks, umbrellas, and books. The coffee booth, always one of the more popular spots, was noticeably absent. Not as visible were the drop-offs in grants.

In the win column, I think this year's CME was one of the best I have attended. I think the CME Committee did an excellent job. They worked with a very tight budget,

and produced an outstanding program. Although the attendance may have been down slightly, I think everyone there was pleased. The speakers were informative, the food was very good, the entertainment was excellent, and most importantly, the dealers at "Casino Night" were quite generous with the rules.

What I consider the "bowl game" for this year is the new PA legislation. While this has not passed the full legislature at this point, things are looking good; we are entering the fourth quarter with a lead and the ball. This was not achieved without the efforts of the Legislative Committee, and the letters and calls by many of our members. If this legislation is approved, it will be due to the team pulling together.

I think the final State of the Academy is good, and will only improve under Mia Hyde's leadership. She will have an excellent corps of returning players, and several new recruits who are sure to become "Hall of Famers."

Again, I thank you for allowing me to serve NAPA.

After Treatment, Aftercare

Recovery can be a new concept to recovering professionals, their families, and their colleagues. Sometimes there are misconceptions and fears accompanied by unreasonable expectations of the involved parties. It is important to have patience with recovering individuals and to become familiar with the recovery process in order to be able to give them positive support.

One very important aspect of an ongoing recovery after primary treatment is aftercare, also known as continuing care. Each professional in treatment develops his/her own aftercare plan prior to discharge to ensure a successful recovery. One important component of this plan is weekly in-person attendance at a professionally facilitated aftercare group. Weekly attendance at a professionally facilitated aftercare group provides the recovering professional an opportunity to continue to address primary recovery issues, especially those unique to health service professionals. Weekly attendance also requires personal accountability

to the group leader and group members for sobriety and recovery.

Many studies have substantiated the importance of weekly aftercare meetings to success with long-term recovery. Aftercare groups are now available online, but in-person programs are recommended by the Nebraska Licensee Assistance Program (NE LAP) for health service professionals who need to have the highest level of accountability for their successful recovery.

Ongoing aftercare group attendance can be a measure of the strength of the professional's commitment to recovery. The NE LAP recommends aftercare for a minimum of six months if treatment was an intensive outpatient program and for one year if it was a residential or inpatient program. History has shown that if attendance at (commitment to) weekly aftercare declines, the commitment to recovery declines and the risk for relapse increases.

An established aftercare plan for a health service professional also usually in-

cludes regular attendance at AA or NA self-help meetings, counseling, and a healthcare professionals' 12-Step support group. It is important that the aftercare plan for a health service professional takes into account the unique issues related to public safety, practice demands, and personal recovery needs. A well-developed aftercare plan provides a clear outline of expected recovery activities and allows for the monitoring of a successful recovery process. Ongoing monitoring of aftercare progress can help the health service professional stay on track with their recovery and ensure a safe and successful practice for the individual, their colleagues, and the public.

If you have further questions about the Nebraska Licensee Assistance Program, or feel that you may benefit from assistance from the NE LAP, please contact the NE LAP Coordinator Judi Leibrock, or NE LAP Counselor Tricia Veech, at (800) 851-2336 or (402) 354-8055.

April 2009

Richard Cimpl, MD awarded Supervising Physician of the Year

Submitted by Kelli Thomazin, PA-C

It was with much pleasure that I was able to speak in front of the NAPA membership about my supervising physician. Dr. Cimpl (pronounced “simple”) has been my supervising physician for more than six years now, and I have grown to appreciate him both as a doctor and a person. This MD/PA journey started many years ago.

I began my career as a PA in the state of Rhode Island. On graduating from PA school in 1993, I initially sought out a position in family medicine. After weeks of unsuccessfully looking for a family practice job, I accepted a position with a group of four orthopedic surgeons. Little did I know this would start my passion for orthopedics. During my six years in orthopedics in Rhode Island, I was able to gain an appreciation for the practice of orthopedics and have really enjoyed this area of medicine. After the birth of my first child in 1998 I wanted to move closer to family, so we looked at coming back to my hometown of Columbus, Nebraska.

I looked up the orthopedic group in Columbus and learned there were two orthopedic surgeons. Dr. Richard Cimpl had been in Columbus for several years, and he had just added a partner, Dr. Thomas Connolly. I came back to visit my family in December of 1998 and approached Dr.



Richard Cimpl, M.D., Supervising Physician of the Year.

Cimpl about hiring me as a PA for their office. Dr. Cimpl wasn't exactly sure what a PA was or what they could do for his practice. I tried to educate him about what I could do for him and how I could enhance the care of his patients. I explained to him that a PA could help with office patients, apply and remove casts, evaluate and treat ER patients, assist in the OR, and help with patient hospital rounds. He thought this seemed like a good idea but was not ready to hire another person to his staff; he had just gotten a partner and wasn't sure yet how a PA would fit into his office.

I then accepted an orthopedic job in Denver, which did not turn out to be a good fit for my family or me. So in 1999 I again approached Dr. Cimpl, but he still wasn't ready. My family and I then moved to work in Lander, Wyoming, a great small town at the base of the Wind River Mountains, to work for another orthopedic doctor. I learned a lot about orthopedics and enjoyed being near the mountains. But we still wanted to be closer to our families in Columbus. So after two and a half years working in Lander, I approached Dr. Cimpl a third time, in July of 2002. Finally Dr Cimpl was sold on the

PA profession and I was coming home.

Joining Dr. Cimpl's practice has been a learning experience. I have helped him deliver not just quality but compassionate health care. Dr. Cimpl has provided orthopedic care to the Columbus and Albion communities for the last twenty-four years. He takes great pride in his work in the OR, in the ER, and in the office. Dr. Cimpl is a self-learner and takes it upon himself to stay current with new orthopedic techniques and treatments. He gives the time needed to his patients until their questions are answered and they are comfortable with their treatment. He often will send cards to patients for their anniversaries, birthdays, and funerals. Even on busy days he stays calm and focused on each patient. If another patient needs to be seen on a busy day, he often will say, "I am here to serve."

Since I joined his practice, he has taught me a great deal about life, not just orthopedics. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue with my purpose in life, to care for patients as a PA. More importantly, I am grateful to witness his continued and strong commitment to God, his faith, and his family.

I am always encouraged that even in the midst of working long hours, and dealing with the stresses of life, Dr. Cimpl somehow is continually able to make others around him smile and laugh. Enjoying his work has always seemed to come easy for him. Thank you, Dr. Cimpl.

NAPA Board of Directors Meeting

July 11, 2009
9 AM

Anderson Management Inc
1335 H St # 100
Lincoln, NE

*NAPA Board Meetings are
open to all members*



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Russ Coash, PA-C, Managing Editor

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Newsletter report for BOD meeting 4/15/09

Submitted by Penni Jackson, PA-C

The NAPA Board of Directors met on April 15, 2009 at the Holiday Inn in Kearney, NE. President Jon Monk called the meeting to order at 12:20 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum of voting members confirmed. The minutes from the previous BOD meeting were reviewed and accepted as submitted.

President's Report

Jon Monk attended the 2009 NAPA Legislative Breakfast. He also has been working with Mia on the awards for the Spring CME conference. A letter was written by Jon Monk for Colon CA screening as part of the pilot program, verifying that NAPA is in support of primary screening.

President – Elect's Report

Mia also attended the Legislative Breakfast in February 2009. She has been gathering and soliciting nominees/volunteers for upcoming board elections and working with Jon on the awards.

Past President's Report

Kathleen Tonkin worked on and attended the Legislative Breakfast in February, and the feedback she received on LB250 was good. About fifteen senators attended. She contacted several individuals about serving on the PAC committee, and a letter of recommendation from NAPA was sent supporting all the nominees. She also helped Darwin with the final bylaw wording that will be introduced at the GM meeting on Friday in Kearney that will allow the foundation to become a committee of NAPA. Invitations went out for the Past Presidents' Reception, and she continues to work with Michelle to post articles on the website and update content of our site.

Secretary Report

Penni Jackson reported she has been in contact with Michael Powe at AAPA and Chuck Scholtes regarding Medicare issues. It was brought to her practice's attention that consults cannot be performed as a split-share visit. If both the doctor and midlevel provider are involved in the consult, it then becomes a follow-up visit for billing purposes.

Treasurer's Report

Dave commented on his experience at CORE, which he felt was very informative this year. He recommended we all review the AAPA's twelve-point strategic plan for the next several years to try and support the constituent organizations. The reimbursement for mileage per IRS is now fifty-five cents per mile. Our taxes will be filled by May 15, 2009 per Dana Cole, and data and paperwork will be submitted to them by Anderson Management.

BOD Member-at-Large Report

Russ Coash was concerned about a recent email regarding a reimbursement issue that could potentially impact PAs. Chuck is going to look into this issue further and may consult with Michael Powe from the AAPA. Discussed sending out newsletter this time since it will include general membership meeting information. Reminder to vote for NAPA and AAPA elections.

Committee and Liaison Reports

PA Committee

Chuck Scholtes went off the committee last Friday and now Paul Shellabarger is on the committee. Dave Holting, M.D. and John Davies, PA-C are the other committee members.

The term is for five years.

Publication/Communication

Michelle Christensen noted there is a huge problem with the database, as there are over 1800 people currently listed in the database. Committee has decided the only solution to this problem is to wipe out the entire database, which will require all the current members to have to resign back into the website. The committee has tried to filter the database but it isn't working properly. There is going to be a meeting between Anderson and the website committee in June to discuss and correct all the issues.

Membership

Amy Meeks wasn't present but Andy reported that 352 members have so far renewed their memberships. New membership cards have not been sent out yet because

updating on the database is still trying to occur. Andy and Michelle note that the current list in the database is 1800. Students are unable to access the new newsletters and job listings, which are causing some frustration for them. Tom wondered why the process so redundant since anyone practicing within the state of Nebraska is listed on the HHS website. It was discussed whether the board needs to make up new rules/regulations for applications. It was agreed that a welcome letter is needed for new members. Michelle offered to contact Amy and discuss the welcome letter. The list of 700 PAs for the state of Nebraska was sent a membership renewal form, the newsletter, and the BCBS letter and legislative letter.

Legislative

Stephanie VanderMeulen has been attending the state meetings since September. The hot topic is re-entre into clinical practice after taking time off. The medical board recommends not letting your license laps. You can keep your license regardless of whether you are actually practicing as long as you keep your CMEs and exams current.

Bonnie reported LB250 is going to be amended into 195, which is a bill that is guaranteed to pass. As of right now there is no information as to when it will be discussed, but 195 is a priority bill so it will for sure be discussed. The worse case scenario is that LB250 will be pulled off 195, and in that case it would be reintroduced again next year since it is a two-year session. If and when it passes it will become affective 90 days after it passes. The bill has to be approved all or none.

HOD Representative

Tom Grothe noted they are trying to update the ten-year statistics. Online voting currently underway.

Nebraska Physician Assistant Foundation

Darwin Brown thanked Andy at Anderson Management for all his help with the scholarships. Two final checks will go out to both programs for the scholarships. The voting process will take place on Friday at the general membership meeting to move forward with the grandfathering of the

In the Board Room

foundation into a committee. The bylaws changes were submitted on the website and again will have to be voted on and approved. The committee will keep track of the fundraising and expenses for the PAF.

CME Committee

Dara Schroder reported there are 256 pre-registered for the conference; about half of them are students. Numbers of attendees and vendors are down from last year. COPIC is still sponsoring 50% of Thursday night meals. There are twenty-five speakers speaking at the conference this year, with twenty-three hours of category I CME currently approved through the AAPA. Casino Night is scheduled to take place again this year on Thursday evening. The CME Committee is in need of more volunteers. The conference is booked in Kearney through 2012. Our conference is still cheaper than most in view of the amount of CMEs offered and food provided.

NAPA Office

Andy reported for Anderson Management that the database is still the biggest concern. New memberships are still coming in; currently at 352. The office has been busy preparing for the conference.

PARA/Liaison development and activities

Karen Schrader presented a summary showing where the group has been over the past year. NEHAN meetings occur about six times per year. They have been busy discussing the BCBS issues and how a third major health facility in the state would benefit certain areas of the state. A press conference was held earlier this year.

Patient Safety

Darwin Brown and Patty Scholting reported the Coalition remains very active and is entering its fourth year as an organization. Thank-yous went out to NAPA for the organization's previous donations. They continue to work on receiving further grants. There are currently sixty-five critical-access hospitals within the state, and twenty-two have reported high-caliber incidences with some even resulting in death. The first formal meeting will be held in Kearney; date to be announced.

Student Society Reports

Union College Jennifer Flider reported forty-eight students from Union should

be on site at the NAPA conference. Seth Lauterbach, Class of 2010 went to Nicaragua over spring break, and there is also a mission trip scheduled this summer in Malawi, Africa. The American Red Cross blood drive was very successful on April 13th with sixty-two pints raised. The Class of 2009 will graduate on May 8th. The class of 2010 will start clinical rotations at the end of May, and the Class of 2012 (twenty-five students) has been selected. She also reported Becky Stafford and Jan Seltman are leaving the Union Program and will be greatly missed.

UNMC Program Lea Wells reported the Class of 2010 has been busy participating in several different community service activities. They have also been taking full advantage of the clinic experiences this semester. They also expect a great turn from the students at the NAPA conference but some will be leaving early as the Anatomy Memorial Service is being held Friday night.

PA Program Reports

UNMC Program Tom Grothe noted Clare Kennedy has returned to the program. The class size will be increasing to forty-two, with plans to increase to fifty gradually over the next three years. This was decided upon based on the trend of other facilities to help with shortage of physicians across the country. There are thirty-two females

and eight males in the new class.

Old Business

Legislative Breakfast occurred on Tuesday, February 24th at Billy's restaurant in Lincoln at 7:00 a.m. Thank-you went out to Andy for all his help with this function.

Thank-you letter was written by Megan thanking NAPA for the opportunity to attend CORE in Washington, DC, and read out loud by Jen Flider from Union.

Nebraska reception at AAPA conference in San Diego NAPA has agreed to donate \$1000 to the cause, which Union College and UNMC will also match. Arrangements have been made by Mark Christensen and are on the AAPA website. Details will also be placed on the NAPA website.

NAPA dues increase for 2010 Currently NAPA dues are at \$75. It was proposed to increase the dues to \$100 per year for fellow and associates; \$75 for sustaining members; students will remain free; new members half-price (\$50) for the first year. This will be presented by Mia at the general membership meeting. It is noted that the last increase was in the mid '90s (over ten years ago).

New Business

Open floor There were no other topics for discussion presented. Meeting was adjourned by President Jon Monk at 3:50 p.m. Next meeting scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on July 11th at the NAPA office in Lincoln.



Casino Night - Everyone's a Winner!

The Nebraska PA

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NAPA Members Attend CORE

Submitted by Patty Scholting, PA-C

In February, NAPA sent representatives to a set of leadership development seminars in Washington DC. These seminars were conducted during the AAPA's Constituent Organization Resource Exchange (CORE).

NAPA board members David Powell, Patty Scholting, and Dara Schroeder attended, as well as Chelsie Doane and Union College PA student Megan Heidtbrink. Overall, the group was very pleased with their experiences at CORE. They felt the event offered practical information that can be utilized at the constituent organization level. Each of these attendees wishes to thank NAPA for this enlightening opportunity and would like to encourage other members to consider attending future CORE events.

The stated mission of CORE is to equip current and future AAPA constituent organization leaders with specific tools and skills they need to lead, manage, and provide excellent service to their members. This



NAPA representatives to CORE: (from left to right) David Powell, Dara Schroeder, Patty Scholting, Chelsie Doane and Megan Heidtbrink.

year's busy two-day event included workshops on budgeting basics, media relations, parliamentary procedure, state government affairs, CME grant applications, and how to make the most of your board meetings. In addition, the general sessions presented information on meeting the challenges of constituent organizations, understanding the role of the House of Delegates (HOD), communicating with state legislators, contend-

ing with reimbursement issues, managing volunteer leaders, planning CME events, and marketing membership.

This year's CORE was held on February 21st and 22nd. The AAPA has not set specific dates for the next set of CORE workshops, but these are slated to be held in 2011 (according to the AAPA website). If you are interested in future CORE meetings, please contact Mia Hyde, NAPA president-elect.