

# newsletter

## NMMB Update

### Meet the Class President of UNM's PA Class of 2014

January 2014

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## Regulatory Changes in New Mexico in Response to the ACA

by C. Daniel Otero, PA-C  
Co-Chair NMAPA Legislative Committee

On October 29, 2013, the New Mexico Human Services Department, Medical Assistance Division, issued a proposed regulation, which creates the rules and regulations for Centennial Care.

Centennial Care is the new name of the New Mexico Medicaid program, which began on January 1, 2014. Medicaid's different programs—Salud, CoLTS and Optum—are being combined into Centennial Care. Centennial Care services will be provided by four managed care organizations (MCOs). The services provided by the MCOs include physical health, behavioral health, long-term care and community benefits.

The implementation of Centennial Care provides an opportunity to advance a PA's authority and practice. Matthew Potter, a policy analyst for the AAPA, recognized several fundamental principles that are essential and missing from a PA's authority under Centennial Care, including (1) ordering laboratory and diagnostic testing; (2) PAs first assist; (3) nutritional counseling services; (4) moderate sedation services; and (5) behavioral health services.

Mr. Potter provided the NMAPA Board of Directors with a *New Mexico*

*Medicaid Code Analysis* and potential amendments to the Centennial Care regulations *Vol. 35, No 35 Regulation* for our consideration. The NMAPA then submitted comments on the proposed regulations to advance PAs practice under Centennial Care.

The comments, provided in a letter to Emily Floyd, New Mexico Human Services Department, can be found at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/hfgg10jji-9wfnp2/NMAPA%20Centennial%20Care%20comments.pdf>. NMAPA Members are strongly encourage to take a look at it.

Although the letter may be a lot to digest, it's really the "Reader's Digest" version. Without the AAPA's assistance in these matters and their team work approach with our

NMAPA Board, the NMMB, and Larry Horan, our lobbyist, we likely would not have fared as well as we did.

We recently received another announcement from the AAPA about two more proposed New Mexico regulations that our Academy may comment on:

On December 20, 2013, the New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department issued a proposed regu-

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## New Mexico Medical Board Updates

by Albert Bourbon MPAS, PA-C

**1** Reminders have been sent out to all MD/PAs who hold a Federal DEA License to submit verification of completion of mandated CME regarding Pain Management by July 1, 2014.

It is the PA's responsibility to submit proof of 5 hours CME to New Mexico Medical Board, 2055 South Pacheco St. Bldg 400, Santa Fe, NM 87505. ph. 505-476-7220

**2** At the November Board meeting two rules were approved affecting PA's.

- Amending Definition of Supervising Physician. This rule states that Physicians under an active monitoring contract may supervise PAs provided they do not have restriction in

addition to monitoring.

- Licensure requirement for PAs. This change allows Board staff to go back 2 years instead of 5 years for work experience when processing license applications.

**3** Also approved was acceptance of FCVS profiles for PAs. These are credential verifications on PAs who utilize the FSMB (Federation of State Medical Board) Process.

**4** Reminder that for PAs who access renewal process online (which is recommended) will have to complete a workforce study survey which was mandated by the legislation. This survey does help give PAs credit for contributing to health care and acknowledging us as Primary Care Providers in New Mexico.

## Regulatory Changes in New Mexico

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lation that amends general provisions concerning operator's safety. The regulation requires an applicant for safety operator to submit a physical examination certified by a physician. PAs are not authorized to certify the physical examination.

On December 30, 2013, the New Mexico Department of Game

and Fish issued a proposed regulation which amends rules regarding Oryx licenses. The regulation requires a physician to certify an individual's mobility impairment for the purpose of obtaining a license. PAs are not authorized to certify the mobility impairment.

NMAPA members are encouraged to contact the chapter to recommend submitting a comment which requests that PAs be authorized to certify a mobility impairment for hunting

license applicants. Any comment may be submitted to Department of Game and Fish, PO Box 25112, Santa Fe, NM 87504, 505-476-8000.

The AAPA Issue Brief on PA ability to certify health status (<http://www.aapa.org/uploadedFiles/content/>

[The\\_PA\\_Profession/Federal\\_and\\_State\\_Affairs/Resource\\_Items/SL\\_Evaluating-HealthStatus\\_v3.pdf](http://www.aapa.org/uploadedFiles/content/The_PA_Profession/Federal_and_State_Affairs/Resource_Items/SL_Evaluating-HealthStatus_v3.pdf)),

could serve as a foundation of any comments New Mexico PAs would wish to submit.

Liz Roe from the AAPA will be engaged to draft NMAPA comments for both of these rules.

NMAPA thanks Matthew Potter and Liz Roe, Larry Horan, our lobbyist, our Legislative committee members, and supportive physicians and legislators for the assistance they have provided.

## Sasha on the Move

If you ever get to meet Sasha Sokolowski, PA-S, you will soon pick up on one thing: her passion for health care runs in her blood. Her parents were both in the medical field and her father, a military pharmacist, took the family from state to state and even to a couple reservations in New Mexico.

Wherever they were, Sasha always found herself drawn to the medical settings where her parents worked. Free time was spent hanging out at the hospitals and clinics because that's where she wanted to be. So choosing the medical field was always a given.

She considered medical school, but ultimately chose the PA profession because of the greater flexibility to change specialties. When asked what else she might have done if medicine didn't work out, she hesitates for the first time during the interview.

"That was the scary thing, not knowing what else I'd do if I didn't get into PA school."

For Sasha, there was no alternative. And her focus has served her well—not only did she get into UNM's PA program on her first try, she is also President of the 2014 PA class and represented UNM at the AAPA IMPACT conference in Washington DC last year.

As class president, she helps organize various charity drives. They've done drives for Road Runner Food Bank and Saranam in the past, and they're

currently doing a drive to collect books for Albuquerque Reads, New Mexico PTA, and UNM Child Life. Some of the books will be delivered in by students who are on a rural rotation.

She's also mentoring the PA class president of 2015 and enjoys helping with the charity projects they organize.

But it's not all work and no play. She's taking full advantage of her last year of school to enjoy the upcoming spring break on the beach with some friends.

Clearly, time management is a skill she's harnessed well.

If you're a new PA student, Sasha advises to "find what works for you" in terms of balancing your schedule. She knows well the challenge of an accelerated program, and for her it was finding a balance between school and friends and family.

"If all I did was school, school, school, I would have burned out".

When the going gets tough and the days get long, she says it also helps to "remember why you did this in the first place".

Knowing why doesn't always mean you know where, though. Sasha's enjoyed all of her classes and rotations so much that she hasn't quite narrowed down what she wants to practice upon graduation this August.

Specialties at the top of her list include

ER, dermatology, surgery, and now that her current rotation is at the Lovelace Women's Hospital, women's health. In fact, the night before our interview, she was thrilled to get called in for her first emergency c-section.

One direction she's seriously considering after graduation is an ER rotation at Cook County Hospital, Chicago,



Sasha Sokolowski, PA-S, third from the left.

the setting for the popular 90s series "ER". She admits that it's a competitive program to get into, and the timing might not work with her graduation date. But she thinks she will really like ER and describes it as a "fast-paced family practice where you never know who your next patient might be".

Sasha's long-term plans include a possible MBA in order to open a comprehensive wellness center that includes everything from family practice and urgent care to yoga and massage in order to fulfill a client's complete health care needs.

Does such a thing exist? Sasha shrugs. It doesn't matter. You sense that if she can dream it, it just might happen.

## CME Opportunities

### 2014 Fundamentals of Hospital Medicine

<http://www.fundamentalsofhospitalmedicine.com>

Thursday, January 23 –  
Sunday, January 26, 2014

Temple, Texas 76508

### Snooze News You Can Use—An Update on Sleep Medicine

February 22, 2014

Marriott Pyramid North Hotel  
Albuquerque, NM

For more information and registration, download the brochure at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/mo9w98lgtidyog/ThoracicBrochure2014-0113.pdf>.

### AAPA Conference 2014

May 24 – 28, 2014

Boston, MA

*Check the NMAPA website for more!*





## Addiction Medicine in Primary Care: Expert Practice Series Presentations

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) partnered with QuantiaMD to develop an [Addiction Medicine in Primary Care](#) lecture series. In eight brief presentations the Nation's leading experts,



including Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of NIDA, provide information about addiction research, responsible opioid prescribing practices, reimbursement for screening and brief intervention, and characteristics of medications used to treat alcohol and drug use disorders.

Photo credit: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/26406919@Noo/2217375343/>

Each 5 to 10 minute presentation covers important topics related to substance abuse that every clinician should be informed about, including:

- The risks and benefits of prescribing opioids
- Drug and alcohol use, detection, intervention, treatment methods, and medications
- Adolescent substance abuse
- Substance use disorders and HIV
- How addiction affects the brain

Viewing one or all of these short presentations offers clinicians insights and guidance that can be easily applied in daily practice to improve patient care.

Addiction Medicine in Primary Care is part of the NIDAMED portfolio of resources. If you have questions about this or any of the other NIDAMED resources, contact [nidacoeteam@jbsinternational.com](mailto:nidacoeteam@jbsinternational.com).

## Impact the Future!

Every year NMAPA gets numerous requests to shadow a PA from people who are thinking about applying to PA school. We especially need PAs in the Albuquerque area.

Expressing interest doesn't commit you. You only take on a shadow when and if it fits into your schedule. The payoff is the joy of sharing something you care about and influencing someone to embark on this wonderful profession!

If you are interested, please contact Briana Ross at [nmphysicianassistent@gmail.com](mailto:nmphysicianassistent@gmail.com).