

Student Corner

Danielle Cohen is PAHPM's newest student representative from Stony Brook University. Danielle has a strong passion for Palliative Care and Alzheimer's disease stemming from experience with her grandfather. As a sophomore in college, Danielle wrote and illustrated ["What's Wrong with Grandpa? A Children's Story About Alzheimer's"](#). Danielle hoped this story would bring comfort and understanding children and adults who have a loved one with dementia as well as be a tribute to her grandfather. She worked with the [Alzheimer's Disease Resource Center of Long Island](#) and the Oneonta chapter of the Alzheimer's Association to display and share her book.

Danielle participated in a course entitled "Near Death Experience" during her senior year of college. In this course, she volunteered with local hospice patients and took part in group discussions regarding death and dying issues influenced by modern medicine. She found this experience to be so enlightening that she maintained her volunteer status for two years while also working full-time as a medical scribe in the Emergency Department at Stony Brook University Hospital. Danielle is now in her second year of the Physician Assistant program at Stony Brook University.

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Legislature Update

A final letter of support for the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (H.R.1676), or **PCHETA**, is being sent out to targeted Congress members that have not yet signed the bill. PCHETA was first introduced to the House in March and calls for support of PC and Hospice Education Centers to improve training of health professionals in palliative care.

Additionally, it calls for establishment of palliative care internships for persons preparing for advanced education nursing degrees, social work degrees, or physician assistant studies. Right now, there are 219 House and 23 Senate co-sponsors. A second bill, **H.R.2797 Patient Choice and Care Act**, includes PAs as part of the interdisciplinary team providing hospice and palliative medicine. Please contact your local representative at <http://www.congress.gov/> and ask for support of these bills!



Richard Lamkin, Amy Melnick, and Judy Knudson at the NCP Summit

PAHPM Provides Voice to Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care

In May 2017, PAHPM was proudly accepted as the ninth organization to make up the National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care (the Coalition). The Coalition was formed in 2002 to ensure the growth and quality of Hospice and Palliative Medicine based on four pillars: Cooperation, Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration. One of the Coalition's initiatives is the National Consensus Project for Quality Palliative Care (NCP). The objectives of NCP are to further define,

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BOARD MEMBERS

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Meet PAHPM President | Richard Lamkin, MPH, PA-C



Richard Lamkin, like many providers, was introduced to palliative care through an ill family member with a large symptom burden. Shortly after this experience, Richard graduated with Masters' Degrees in Public Health and Physician Assistant Studies from St. George's University and Touro College of Health Sciences. He started his career as a hospitalist at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Montefiore Medical Center. He often took care of highly acute, seriously ill patients and in this experience, Richard found himself frequently consulting the Palliative Care team and developed a passion for the specialty. After 2.5 years, he was offered a job on the inpatient palliative care floor and consult service. Richard now is the sole Palliative Care provider at the Praxair Cancer Center within the Western Connecticut Health Network.

Richard learned of PAHPM through attendance at a Palliative Care lecture at the 2015 AAPA conference. "I went to a lecture where the annual PAHPM meeting was

mentioned. It was incredibly refreshing to see a group of individuals who were so incredibly passionate about their work in palliative care. It was those colleagues who inspired, challenged, and mentored me and continue to do so." Just two years later in May 2017, he accepted the President position of PAHPM.

"There is so much important work to do in Palliative Care and PAs can be vital part of that work. It's a very exciting time for PAs in the specialty. We're getting more recognition for the work PAs are doing and people are starting to realize how valuable we can be to the Palliative Care Team," Richard states.

Richard is also involved in the Patient Quality of Life Coalition, the National Consensus Project, and published ["I Just Felt Like I Was Stuck in the Middle": Physician Assistants' Experiences Communicating with Terminally Ill Patients and Their Families the Acute Care Setting](#).

When Richard isn't working, he enjoys traveling, cooking, hiking, swimming, and now, training his first dog!

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underscore, and improve the delivery of palliative care in the United States.

PAHPM members Judy Knudson, Harvey Nix, Richard Lamkin, Nadya Dimitrov, Nathan Boucher, and Ryan Baldeo are acting on various committees within the NCP and working on the newest revision of the Clinical Practice Guidelines. This is one of the hallmark documents for improving the quality and access to palliative care created by NCP and used by Joint Commission for advanced certification of PC programs.

With the support of AAPA, PAHPM has quickly developed a voice within NCP and the Coalition. PAHPM is not only making strides to improve quality palliative care, but also increase recognition of physician assistant's role and importance in this specialty. In June, **Judy Knudson** and **Richard Lamkin**, members of the Steering and Writing Committee respectively, attended the NCP Stakeholder Strategic Directions Summit in Chicago. There were 53 representatives from 43 national and regional agencies including representatives from the nine-members of the Coalition, members of Congress, provider organizations, caregiver support systems, accreditation agencies, and more. This meeting was created to discuss the essential elements of quality primary and specialty inpatient and outpatient palliative care. These ideas are now being used by the Writing and Steering Committees to compose the 4th revision of the Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care. The projected publication of the final guidelines is July 2018.

Judy and Richard will be presenting the new guidelines at the AAPA Annual Conference in May 2018 in New Orleans. Key leaders within the NCP have asked to participate in the conference and assist in rolling out these guidelines to PAs. For more information: <https://www.nationalcoalitionhpc.org/ncp>.

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She is involved in Primary Care Enrichment, a unique program that allows clinical exposure in the primary care setting during the didactic year, and has developed further interest in Palliative Care. Danielle graduates in June 2018 and hopes to begin her career as a PA while continuing to be involved in the practice and education of palliative medicine.

[Click here to hear a candid interview with Danielle.](#)

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