



Newsletter

NP/PA Special Interest Group of the American Headache Society Edition One / September 2008

Boston is a city of history and many of America's first. The first public school was established there in 1635 and America's first college, Harvard, just a year later. Even the first subway in America was in Boston. On June 27th of this year was another remarkable first, the first meeting of the NP/PA Special Interest Group of the American Headache Society.

The significance of this *first* is hard to overstate. This will be noted as the leading step in a long path for our professions and our contribution to headache medicine. Nineteen attended including Andrea Taylor (program coordinator of the AHS) who kindly reported the minutes from that meeting. Those minutes are available at our Special Interest Group website.

At this present time NP/PA Section is fortunate to have a total of forty members, representing a broad spectrum of professional and educational backgrounds. It will be exciting working together in realizing our Interest Group's goals.

Recently the board of directors of the AHS announced that the Strategic Plan's Goals from the coming years would include the following: Education, Patient Advocacy, Research, Practice Management, Organizational and Membership Strategies & Patient Education. In efforts to mirror the Society at large, the NP/PA group has adopted our specific goals and objectives:

1. Provide multidisciplinary participation in support of the mission of the society to include educational and patient care outcomes of persons with headache.
2. Foster collaboration and collegial support for NPs and PAs who provide care for persons with headache to facilitate optimal outcomes and collaborative care.
3. Identify and explore common practice issues and educational needs of NPs and PAs to promote dialogue and optimal outcomes in persons with headache.
4. Facilitate research efforts and practice models supporting a multidisciplinary approach to best practice models in headache.

More specifically the section has future ambitions of encouraging research about all aspects of headache medicine, especially with NPs and PAs as lead authors. We also want to encourage research about the roles of NPs and PAs in headache medicine including patient management outcomes.

The section anticipates sponsoring a pre-course at one of the major meetings, either the Scientific Meeting in 2010 or the Scottsdale Meeting in 2009. Topics of such a pre-course could be a comprehensive view of the diverse roles PAs and NPs have in headache medicine. This could include all aspects from how to hire NPs and PAs, to reimbursement issues, dependent and independent role models and medical-legal issues or our practice.

The section wants to support the NPs and PAs presently in headache practice and to encourage others to enter this rewarding specialty. This would include developing training programs, fellowships and possibly quality assurance through sub-specialty board exams.

Lastly the section wants to support the AHS by educating other members about our contributions thorough such activities as the pre-course and obtaining full membership in the society.

With each newsletter we will have a Practice Spotlight on one of the NP or PA practices. On the next page is a spotlight on the practice of Eric Schuman, MPAS, PA-C.

Soon you will be receiving a survey so you can tell the section more about yourselves and how you want to be involved.

Practice Spotlight An



Eric Schuman, MPAS, PA-C / Salem, Oregon

Unexpected Twist

It was twelve years ago that my career took an unexpected, but decisive turn. Having graduated in 1975 from the Long Island University Physician Associate Program, I worked in Family Practice and HIV management at Kaiser Permanente in Salem, Oregon.

As an editorial board member of the Journal of the American Academy of Physician Assistants, in 1996 I was asked to peer review a cover article titled "Headache: Acute, Benign and Desperate." Peer review is a double blind process, so neither the author nor I was aware of the other's identity. It was many years later when I met J. Michael Jones, a headache specialist at the Mayo Clinic and author of the article I had recommended for publication. Mike is currently co-chair of the NP/PA section of AHS.

Headache held little interest for me prior to reviewing Mike's piece. Afterwards, my interest in the topic came to the attention of Kaiser's chief of neurology, who offered me a position in his department. Still less than enthusiastic, I agreed to a trial period during which I would receive training and supervision by a headache specialist while seeing a limited number of patients.

Before I knew it, headache had become my clinical passion. 12 years after reviewing Mike's article, I've had the privilege of lecturing over 100 audiences on various headache topics. Like many of my NP/PA colleagues, my audiences include MDs, NPs, PAs, RNs and pharmacists.

In my clinical work I perform consults on referral from primary care providers and specialists within the Kaiser system. I provide longitudinal care for patients until they are stabilized, when I ordinarily return them to their primary care providers. I am fortunate to work within a system where I have access to infusion centers throughout our region (Oregon/Washington), as well as services including physical therapy, a specialized TMD clinic, biofeedback and psychotherapy.

In addition to treating patients in the departments of pediatric and adult neurology, I serve as an assistant professor at Oregon Health Science University PA Program. I also teach advanced efficiencies in use of the electronic medical record and online resources for Kaiser Permanente's Department of Medical Informatics.

In my "other life," my partner and I help find homes for neglected and abused golden retrievers while volunteering for Golden Bond Rescue, an Oregon-Washington rescue group. Between June and October, we enjoy exploring the Pacific Northwest in our fiberglass travel trailer -- a time we believe there is no place more beautiful to visit.

Eric