

Transcript

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Hello, everyone. Welcome back and Happy PA week in celebration of PA Week, we have a special guest on this month's episode, and we'll discuss his recent JAAPA publication and work surrounding PA Advocacy. Also, don't forget listeners can now earn CME by listening to the podcast.

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To receive your CME credit and access your certificate, you just need to listen to the podcast and complete the post test and evaluation in AAPA's Learning Center.

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At cmeaapa.org.

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But before we get started and introduce our very special guest, I want to take a moment to celebrate the PA profession and highlight some of our accomplishments. There is an 87% increase in board certified PAs from 2013 to 2023. PAs interact with 10.8 million patients a week. That's over 560 million patient encounters.

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Every year, as per the NCCPA's are crucial in supporting healthcare workforce shortages that are were exacerbated by the pandemic.

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By expanding workforce, so we're projected to have a 31% increase in employment by 2030 and 43% of PAs now participate in telemedicine. PAs go beyond by increasing patient access to quality and equitable care, advocating for our patients.

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And pushing the profession forward through advocacy efforts, the Harris poll provides patient perspectives on healthcare. Found that 91% say PAs provides safe and effective care, 90% say PAs increased access to care and make it easier to get a medical appointment and 89% say PAs improved patient outcomes. And not to mention that.

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U.S. news and World Report has named the PA profession one of the top five best jobs overall in the country.

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Three and one of the best healthcare jobs for the 7th year in a row, so please take a moment to celebrate yourself this week because we deserve it. Thank you to all of you out there, whether you're in the clinic, the classroom, conducting research, or in the grind to become a PA, we see you and we appreciate you. October is indeed an exciting month for the physician associate profession.

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From coast to coast and beyond, PA students through very experienced PA celebrate PA week. We are so impressed by all of the work our colleagues do and want to highlight some exciting initiatives within our profession.

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Joe Kim and I are thrilled to introduce our guest for this episode. You probably have read his recent emails and communications and now we get a chance to chat about his most recent article in JAAPA. We graciously welcome our current AAPA President Jason Prevelige to the podcast before we dive into discussing.

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And solving the major problems in healthcare, and particularly for the PA profession.

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Jason, can you tell us a little about yourself? How and when did you decide to become a PA and what was the path to becoming AAPA president? Also tell us how you plan to celebrate PA week this year.

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Sure. Thanks for thanks for having me here. This is such a great opportunity and I think my first video podcast have ever done, actually. So this is not, this is a cool experience. So a little known fact about me is that I was originally going to become a kindergarten teacher. My bachelor's degree is actually in history, and it was somewhere about halfway through college when I just had this epiphany of sorts and decided that I wanted to go to medical school.

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So at that point I had no intention or desire to start over with a new major and I really enjoyed History.

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So I continued on and just added the necessary prerequisites where I could. I graduated and then still had a few courses left to take before I could begin that medical school process. Well, I found along the way I needed to be an adult and pay some bills, so I began working in an inpatient alcohol and drug detox facility, and that was a really impactful experience for me for multiple reasons.

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But a significant one is that while there I worked with the PA, he introduced me to his experience and the profession, and I quickly knew that was the path that I wanted to take. And so from there it was just sort of off to the races, you know, what do I do now? And started, you know, looking at the programs I had available to me here in the Northeast and finished up the pre-recs and Quinnipiac here, right.

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So I had a great peaceful experience and that really set me up for everything else I did, and then my professional life. You asked for my path, the AAPA Presidency, that one really, truly began in 2007 when I entered the PA program at Quinnipiac.

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From the first day our program director Cindy Lord and the other faculty members imparted upon us the importance of giving back both to the profession and the larger world around us.

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She also happened to be AAPA president at the time, well actually president elect, the time and we were so fortunate to be able to be there in San Antonio when she was presented to the world as the new president. We also had many other legends within the profession as faculty for us, including Bill Cohab.

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Bruce Hitzler, Patrick Leanne, Shepherd Stone and so many more, you know, with somewhat AAPA presidents to influence us in hindsight, it's really natural that our program, our program graduates, we're gonna go on to make great and interesting things.

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And I would say to be careful what favors you do for people because that was really what began my involvement. I'm a great friend of mine, became involved with the Connecticut Academy pretty quickly after we graduated. As a path for leadership was being was being created him.

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He pulled me in and he said, hey, I'm doing this annual CME conference. Why don't you come help me with that? And from there, it just snowballed. Before I knew it, I was. I was a director on the board. I was involved in pretty much every committee that we had at some point in time, I became Vice President. I was in the House of Delegates representing in Connecticut. And then I served 2 terms as President of the Connecticut Academy. Subsequently, we had a past member of the AAPA board of directors who was presenting at our Connecticut conference at one point.

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And she approached me and said, hey, when are you become involved at the national level and to be honest, the thought had never crossed my mind to be involved in any other way other than the House of Delegates. However, she encouraged me and she guided me and before long I was chairing a brand new Commission for the AAPA and it all just continued from there. Few years later, I was elected to a term on the Board of Directors and really enjoyed that experience.

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Unfortunately I lost my reelection bid to maintain that seat.

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And so I began to consider other ways that I could stay involved with the Academy. I returned to the House of Delegates. I joined the Judicial Affairs Commission, which I subsequently chaired for several years. And as I really love being in the house and all that happens there, I thought my next path through the leadership journey might have been through the house. Unfortunately, that was not meant to be either. I lost another election there.

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What you do, these losses set me up to to grow and to to learn from my experience and figure out, you know, what can I do differently? How else can I serve? So it's always been fine that's happened to me. And then early last year, I had some close contacts that we're also engaged in the Academy in various ways.



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They suggested that I run for President. So I hemmed and hawed and I was like, I don't know, it's not really for me. I'm not the best person for the role. I've lost a couple of elections, you know, I'm not sure how this is gonna go. Ultimately, it all worked out and here I am today and I'm surrounded by a magnificent board that's engaged and thoughtful, and I really enjoy my time with them and helping, helping to direct the Academy and do all that we're doing right now.

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Ask for PA week since you brought that up, it's gonna be a busy one for me. October is a really hectic month for me. My lots of travel going on, lots of different appearances and events and meetings going on the weekend that kicks off a week. I'm actually returning home from an international PA educator conference. I'm gonna kick off PA week that weekend at a golf tournament hosted by the Connecticut Academy of PAs.

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That golf tournament is actually the second edition of it started last year, and it's actually just a fundraiser. It does nothing more than just raise money for for good purposes, they raise money for PA student scholarships and for a wonderful organization called the Hole in the Wall Gang. Hole in the Wall Gang camp. And there are nonprofit organization, and they provide medically supervised camps and programs at no charge to medically complex children throughout the Northeast.

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And then I'm going to coach my son's hockey team and work clinically a little bit before I go down to Washington, DC.

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For the PAEA Forum, where I'm going to continue to celebrate the weeks surrounded by fellow PAs, I'm trying to rearrange a few things since I'm so close to New York City. We're basically a New York City suburb here, and so I'm trying to see if I can rearrange a little bit and try to get down to PA's on the Plaza on the 11th. After I come back.

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Home. Wow, you are a busy man. Definitely and thanks.

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You know, thanks so much for sharing all of that. I mean it's it's so good to hear like.

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Hear like in your words about your story, I always I always enjoy hearing other PA stories. So. So what I I want to switch gears just a little bit. I want to talk about your article.

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So there's a recent article that you authored in set in the September edition of JAAPA. It was titled Building Bridges with physicians. In the article, you highlight the value and importance of team based practice. You referenced the article titled Physicians Working with Physician Assistants and nurse practitioners, its perceived effects on clinical practice.

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It was published in Health Affairs scholar this summer and explored the findings of the National Survey of 5823. Physicians. Among the respondents, 59% worked directly with PA's and or NP's. The survey found that more than 2/3 of physicians said working with PA's positively affected their clinical practice.

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Based on these results, can you please tell us how you see the future of the PA profession in a team based model and the future of modernized PA practice laws?

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Yeah, you know, really that article underscores the fact that pay contributions to healthcare did not go unnoticed by the majority of physicians. More common sense would tell us.

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The same the article really showcases how practices and patients benefit from enhanced efficiencies, which in part occur when PA's and physicians work collaboratively and not in a supervised manner. Now, regardless of the AMAs efforts to maintain hierarchy and healthcare, we can build more support for modernizing PA care among physicians who understand the old ways of building medical care. Yeah, meet patient demands.

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The SPN's also suggest that the majority of physicians with whom we work on a daily basis would support reduced barriers to practice.



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That patient access to care can be improved. Anecdotally, we all know that our physician colleagues appreciate and respect us. Our recent efforts to push back on the false rhetoric from the AMA is found in number of physicians sharing their feelings on our social channels. Now say they were supportive, really great to see some of these you know positions coming on board and saying hey, AMA doesn't represent me. That's not how I feel. We support collaborative care. We support team based practice.

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Patients deserve access to care, so it's been really, really heartwarming to see that from them. You know, every healthcare provider must be able to do what they're educated and trained to do. That's what team based care is really all about. The old ways have to cease to exist. Medicine as we know it has truly come to be only in the last 100 years or so, with most significant advances in the last 50 years and even more, I'd say in the last 10 or 20 years.

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Which means that the system around the practice of medicine needs to advance, and we can't continue to live in the past.

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And really that's the future that peers are fighting for. Yeah, thank you. And so the current growing issues we face in the field like growing provider shortages, prevalence of burnout.

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Are now alongside increasing prevalence of chronic diseases like diabetes, obesity, mental health disorders and substance use disorders create a strain on healthcare teams. The PA profession was born to address a similar crisis, and our profession has grown to provide solutions in our current crises. In fact, according to a recent Harris poll, the US healthcare system is stretched thin.

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The public is worried about how this will impact their care in the future. Can you take a moment to elaborate how you feel PA's are qualified to address the crisis?

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Yeah. You know, as you pointed out in the introduction, we're one of the fastest growing professions.



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We've nearly doubled the number of PAs in the last decade, with about 95,000 PAs in 2013 to nearly 180,000 in 2023, and we expect to see actually about 28% increase over the following decades through 2033. And as you said, also PA's have more than 500 million patient interactions a year and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality found peers are more likely to practice in rural and remote areas than physicians.

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And initially PAs just care, right? You know, when we look at the issues that you just mentioned, those are areas of focus for our Academy and our Members and we're well positioned to make impact in those areas and many others. Through our engagement, our efforts and research led by PAs each and every day.

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Yeah, definitely. You know, so there was also the the new survey from the Harris Poll published in May of Last Year revealed that 73% of US adults say their healthcare system fails to meet their needs in some way. Now in the last months article, you also discussed how vital that we as a profession.

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And within our state organizations double down our efforts to foster allies.

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Patient advocacy groups, healthcare organizations, and physicians. Can you elaborate on how frontline PA's can build relationships with these organizations?

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Yeah, great question. You know really it's it's less about individual PAs building relationships with those organizations and more about building relationships with those that are around you. We need to encourage PAs to find allies and partners within their own communities and that can be fellow providers, patients, community leaders and ultimately that's going to help connect those organizations with our profession through first hand exposure via their own members.

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Through those connections, those various organizations can be connected with the PA organizations that represent all of us.



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And together they can work to enact the change.

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You know, we should strive to grow a network of people who gladly stand up to support PAs. Those networks are actually really tough to cultivate. If anyone's working in that space before, hard to convince people to stand up and speak against the norm, especially when those folks perceive that the impact may not be directly beneficial to them, though, as we know we're all patients and so improvements to patient care are good for all of us. Yeah. And the AAPA is also having conversations with partners and other organizations at the macro level.

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This is a daily occurrence. It happens at various levels of the.

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With most of our senior staff members dedicating the vast majority of their time to such efforts, the partners that we have are incredible players in the healthcare landscape. Our CEO, Lisa Gables does a fantastic job of making new contacts, building new business efforts and ensuring that we have partnerships that are gonna continue to make the organization and PAs sustainable into the future. But as I said a few minutes ago, you know we need PAs to also have those conversations and spread the word that PAs go beyond at the micro level.

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I constantly tell my students that the best branding for the profession that we can do is actually just go out there and be the best PA that we can be. You know each and every day our patients know us, they love us and then it's come through nearly 60 years of PAs going out there and providing exceptional patient care.

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PAs go beyond for their patients by improving access to care according to that same Harris Poll survey previously mentioned. Patients who have seen a PA recognize the value that PAs bring to healthcare. A new study published earlier this year in the Journal of Medical Regulation affirms that removing barriers to PA practice improves patient access to high quality care.

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According to the article, medical malpractice payment reports of physician assistants related to state practice laws and

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Regulation after a 10 year examination of medical malpractice payment reports data compared to the laws and regulations of states for the same period, removing those barriers to PA practice improves access to high quality and cost effective care while maintaining patient safety. Do you believe it is a lack of this understanding? As you mentioned in your article?

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That interferes with the lawmakers support for PA Bills. How can PAs and our supporters help eliminate the negative narrative regarding modernized PA practice?

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Yeah. You know, in some cases, I think it might be a matter of needing to educate lawmakers about who PAs are and the high quality care that we provide. You know, I I see this all the time with legislators that have really no healthcare experience in our state legislative body here in Connecticut. We have some healthcare providers of various specialties that you know, are on the various.

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Communities, but majority of them are, you know, real estate agents, attorney, it's business people and they don't have that healthcare knowledge. But the reality is that we're not just working to educate them. We're working to reeducate them and in my experience in my own city capital, this is something that I have repeatedly seen in over the years. The AMA has invested millions of dollars to defeat PA, supported bills by spreading misinformation about.

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PA care and qualifications, including that patient safety, is at risk. The AMA may not specifically weigh in, you know, in all capitals.

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But their investments are granted to hundreds of physician organizations that do weigh in and work to oppose our efforts. Now we're working to push back against this narrative. Now, this summer, we send a letter to the AMA calling on them to end their device. So the sorry, the



divisive campaign aimed at discrediting PAs and other healthcare providers and asked for a meeting was really no surprise. But they ignored our request for a meeting.

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So it's in the follow up letter.

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And we amplified the voice of the PA community we saw over 8000 PA's and PA students signed an open letter condemning the AMA's misrepresentation of PAs, and over 4900 PA's took part in a survey about the impact of the AMA campaign on their practice and their workplaces being our collective voice loud and clear in moments like these is really the best way that we can combat that negative narrative.

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Along with continuing to be a good representative of the PA profession within your own community, and I'm so proud of the response I've seen in this campaign it's really about fighting for patience and putting them first, PAs have recognized that and are really stepping up in this.

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So Jason, you bring up a new perspective, in PA advocacy doubling down in our efforts to foster allies, particularly physicians. According to the survey published in Health Affairs color this summer, physicians will agree that working with PAs and I quote, working with PAs increased patient volume and said.

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Collaboration with yes fostered more efficient time use.

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Wrote.

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You noted and I could again, these results combine foundational research highlighted in the article support the authors conclusion that practices benefit by enhanced efficiencies and increased patient volume when PAs and physicians.

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work alongside one another collaboratively, rather than in a supervisory manner. What are some of the modern advocacy efforts that you offer to bridge that gap in PA practice laws on a national level?

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You know, advocacy comes in many different forms, you know. Yes, I did reference that. We need to be building relationships with allies. And that holds true. That's just one form of advocacy. There's plenty of others like being able to understand and communicate research. For example, a new study published in the Journal of Medical Regulation this year affirm that removing barriers to a practice improves access to high quality care. The authors found that states with permissive practice environments.

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Compared to restrictive states had no increased risk of PA medical malpractice payment reports. 00:17:24

Which is completely counter to the narratives that often used in the opposition of our efforts.

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Research like this demonstrates the need for advocacy changes we're pushing for, and we can communicate it effectively. It gets us closer to bridging those gaps, and PA practice laws in both state and national levels, advocacy also takes the floor of building relationships, you know, contributing to research and staying engaged. Traditionally, we have not done a great job at assessing what we do in a scientific way. We've often relied on evidence from others that either may include PAs or we can extrapolate their information to our own price.

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But it makes me really excited to see that PAs are now recognizing the need to increase the amount of research and publications that come from within the profession, and ultimately with every other profession out there having their own issues. No one else is gonna do it for us. So we need to ensure that we're guiding those narratives, talking about staying engaged, the engagement I've seen since the start of my Presidency has been incredible. Everywhere I go, I have peace coming up to me, excited for our efforts and wanting to know more.

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I also hear things like WOW, I just had no idea that all that was out there like that. And I'm really not surprised because unless one is really engaged in the.



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Instead of Arena, it's not surprising that the scope creep campaign hasn't filtered down to them. You know, it's really geared at shutting down legislative modernizations for many healthcare professions that are now physician oriented. And so if someone's not engaged that arena, they may not have heard about it. I just came back actually for the leadership advocacy summit in Washington, DC no. So inspiring to see so many PAs and PA students engaged and excited about advocacy.

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I mean all over the US capital and informing lawmakers about the needs for our patients and how PAs are part of that solution.

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It was really great to be so well received by those legislative offices, but that engagement needs to be consistent. LAS is an opportunity to learn about advocacy, best practices, exchange ideas within with other PAs, collaborate, and so all of that is advocacy, and it's going to help us to bridge that gap.

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Day in and day out, PAs work to improve access to quality and affordable health care while addressing social determinants of health.

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Becoming an advocate for optimal team practice and policy change can seem daunting at times.

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Can you share an example of how a PA advocated for optimal team practice and also what can PAs learn from this example?

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Sure.

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There's examples across the country of PA have advocated for modernizing PA practice laws. The examples are really endless. PAs are out there fighting the fight every single day, doing



what they can to ensure that patients have optimal access to high quality care. For example, the Tennessee Academy of PAs in recent years they've been hosting lobbying days, and when they first began several years ago, they had about 10 attendees coming up to the.

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April this year they had over 300 between students and practicing PAs. As a result, it garnered media coverage. They resulted in great conversations with lawmakers, and this is something our entire professionals working towards having an engaged PA community they can have productive discussions with lawmakers. And I think what we can learn from this is that advocacy efforts like these take time. We can't expect everything to play out perfectly the first time and it requires patience.

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And trust me, from years of experience, you know the waiting to be very frustrating. We've been working on efforts here in Connecticut for many, many years and just can't seem to get the traction that we need. Once the cumulative effort over time that does build a success eventually.

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Jason, I think it's safe to say that every PA who has been in practice quickly encounters integrated legislation that limits scope of practice, and I think that we live in a very political world where we are constantly encouraged to go vote and become involved in grassroots, grassroots efforts. The number of advocacy groups can be overwhelming.

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What are some resources you would recommend for our PAs? How can we get more involved and contribute to move these efforts forward?

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Well, of course I always recommend membership become a member of both AAPA and your state chapter.

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And you know, if you have the means or the need, the special organizations, the the Caucuses, there's so many great organizations that are out there that are standing up for PAs every single day. Get involved in your state chapter, right. Everyone has something you need to offer. And I can tell you from experience that the organizations need you being involved does not



mean much work necessarily. You know, something for everyone, and the organizations will appreciate anything that you can offer as well as your state chapter.

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Along with AAPA, there are plenty of resources to help guide your efforts. There is AAPA's advocacy central e-mail newsletters, leadership and advocacy summit your state chapter likely has a website with plenty of resources on it as well. If there are local meetings, engage in them in conversations. Whether the meetings are in person or.

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Cool. Now it doesn't matter. They're happy to chat with you. Just simply reaching out and saying, hey, what can I do? I guarantee you that they will pull you in and find something for you to do. There's so many ways to contribute to the advocacy efforts. Even if you can only do one thing, it's still of value. Advocacy is really customizable to the amount of time that you have to give. If you have something, somebody will.

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Happily, take it now. If you have 5 minutes.

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Register to vote, identify your legislators, engage in an APAA or CO call to action, call or e-mail your legislators. Share a post on social media. You have a few hours. Maybe attend a legislators town hall or an event, or attend your state chapter.

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Events maybe go?

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To a committee hearing on a priority bill or register to testify in support of a bill.

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You can attend a candidate event, meet with your legislator, or invite your legislator to your practice so they can see what you're doing on a day-to-day basis and see how PAs really are making an impact and going beyond. You have a whole day, maybe attend a lobby day, meet with legislators there, attend your state chapters conference or a specialty conference. Volunteer for a campaign event like canvasinv in a neighborhood. There's really a whole menu of options that one can choose from.



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So I have heard y'all mention so many different ways that PAs make a difference not in in patient care, but also in being advocates for our patients.

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So I know we started out the podcast with a couple of stats. Linda Care share, a couple more 92% support utilizing PAs to address the healthcare workforce shortages and 91% support updating PA practice laws and states to fully utilize their healthcare workforce adjacent in that wonderful article last month in September, you mentioned that PAs strength in their alliances.

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And to quote, give a megaphone.

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To the physicians and other allied voices who share our desire to ensure to practice the full extent of our education, training, experience and benefits of patients couldn't identify with this more some of their biggest champions in my practice have been my collaborating physician that we work with very closely and the nurses and the physical therapists and everybody else. So how can we equip those of us who aren't PAs that are also on the on the same idea of wanting to expand access to patient?

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There to start, to.

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Tackle these big challenges along with us.

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Now ultimately it's up to each of us to stay informed and aware, right? It's important to keep up with healthcare policy.

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Choose in your own state. Stay up today on news coming from the AAPA about advocacy and professional issues nationwide, but again, at the individual level, tackling the challenges we face is all about relationship building, and that begins with conversations you're having in your community and whatever form that may take, whether you're involved in a local organization



or a board, a youth sporting event, your teacher associations. I'll tell you, our PTA loves to have folks come in and, you know, give talks on some topic relevant to them. I've gone in and talked about, you know, winter illnesses and injuries and things like that. So anytime you can get out there and just expose the world to PAs, it's it's a necessary and a great thing. But of course that in your workplace with your patients as well and they brought up earlier. I'm a believer in the idea that the best way to advocate to just be the best PA that you can possibly be.

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Build relationships with patients, physicians, other healthcare providers, anyone that you can demonstrate the power and the impact of the PA profession at your level. There's really a whole house effort and the peers across the country build supportive communities around them. We'll be better positioned to face the challenges head on.

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Thank you. Those are inspiring words. So we have so enjoyed getting to talk with you for our last question. Can you tell us about a recent experience that made you stop and think, man, I am so glad that I'm a PA.

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You know, honestly, as an emergency medicine PA I I think this every day, you know, I work in an environment that allows me to impact lives each and every day. Sometimes it's a great save in a critical patient.

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But many times is just doing the small things for someone that really makes a difference. Finding them a meal, helping them connect with social resources, finding them a pair of socks, or just listening to them. They really need someone to talk to, you know.

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As well, these sorts of opportunities that I'm in now, right, talking with all of you make me so glad to do what I'm doing so, so rewarding to be able to go out, advocate for our profession and our patients and make a difference in a less clinical sort of a way. So just thank you for having me tonight. I really enjoyed this experience.

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Well, thank you for talking with all of us and for really making it about those interpersonal relationships and interactions that we all have because at the end of the day, that's what.



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We take forward with us, so thank you.

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Yes, thanks Jason.

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Happy PA week.

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Yes, happy PA week everyone.

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Thank you, listeners. And as always, be sure that you are one following us on JAAPA social media. That's at JAAPA online.

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And don't forget, listeners can now earn CME by listening.

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To the podcast.

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To receive your CME credit and access your certificate.

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To the podcast. Then complete the post-test and evaluation in APA's learning central at cme.apa.org. Let us know your thoughts about the topics we went over today.

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And until next time.