

Dear PA program faculty:

Each year, thousands of veterans return home from combat and face struggles ranging from personal injury, mental health issues, coping with loss, and the challenge of acclimating back into a society that does not understand where or what they have experienced. As Physician Assistants and PA students we are in a unique opportunity to step in and make a difference in the lives of our Veterans and their families.

Many veterans are awarded care through the VA health system, but that is not the case for all veterans or service members. Many live far from local VA services whereas others choose to seek care through their local medical systems. Both the veterans within the VA system and those outside the VA system deserve the courtesy of healthcare providers that are competent in the needs of our current and former military members.

As a Student Academy of Physician Assistant students, the topic of veteran's healthcare, mental health and social needs has been brought to our attention. During the 2013 IMPACT Conference, the Assembly of Representatives (AOR) of the Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA) met and overwhelmingly voted to encourage PA programs around the country to increase and improve their curriculum surrounding veteran's needs. Veterans are the backbone of our country and our country's freedom, the challenges they and their families face are unique and require special attention from their medical providers.

Over the last year, a group of student volunteers from several PA programs have met and researched common themes that affect veterans within the healthcare system. It is easy to consider the physical needs of our veterans whom may have suffered traumatic injury or amputation, but the mental health and social needs are also pervasive affecting both the veteran and their families.

Attached you will find a list of resources for both educators as well as veterans regarding the physical and mental health of our veterans. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, but will hopefully provide a launching pad to build a curriculum worthy of the sacrifice our veterans have made for our country. We implore you to please consider the addition of veterans needs into your curriculum. If you already provide this material to your PA students, we thank you for your dedication to providing education about veteran's needs and we hope that the following resources can supplement your current materials.

Sincerely,

2014 SAAAPA Veteran's Needs Education Work Group

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