



Letter From The APAC President

December 15, 2021

APAC Members,

We live in historic times. Many changes and events have occurred in the USA and globally. With an ever-present pandemic, a heightened awareness of disparities, and apparent increases in polarity of political views and stances, it can feel overwhelming. This holiday timeframe and recent Thanksgiving holiday have given me time to reflect on what I am grateful for as well as upon positive changes that come from any event(s).

This pandemic has provided opportunities to change how we go about designing and implementing research, recognizing administrative timelines on the front-end can be shortened without sacrificing safety. Vaccine technologies decades in the making were researched and the results incorporated quickly into “emergency use” leading to impactful decreases of hospitalizations and deaths in those vaccinated. The intentional use of available tele-video technologies for visits have led to changes in healthcare philosophy about how patients want and can be seen, potentially improving access to care, creating efficiencies in how we schedule patients, and improving how we collaborate with one another in the care of patients.

With regards to PA practice, we have seen movement in optimal team practice (OTP) and 2020 saw six states (California, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Vermont, Maine, and Florida) adopt elements of OTP in their PA practice acts. In 2021, six more states (Delaware, Idaho, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and Utah) also made OTP-forward PA practice act changes. Finally, in a historic vote, on May 24, 2021, the American Academy of Physician Associates, Inc. (then, American Academy of Physician Assistants) House of Delegates voted 198 to 68 to adopt a change to our professions’ title, from Physician Assistant to Physician Associate.

During my PA career journey, I was first aware of discussions regarding changing the title of our profession when I entered the University of Utah PA program in 2002. This discussion long predates my PA journey. At the center of the debate and discussion has been how “assistant” in our title is perceived by PAs, the public, our patients and healthcare colleagues, health-policy makers, and legislators.

Respecting that each of us will continue to carry our own personal views, reflections, and experience in varying intensities of attachment to the issue, it is now done. We now need to navigate the path forward as a profession; as PA-centric societies, academies, and state organizations; and as individuals.

We are Physician Associates. We are Physician Associates who will for the next awkward days, weeks, months, years, and yes, decades, graduate, certify as, and legally practice as “Physician Assistants” until the necessary legal changes are completed to adopt this new title at federal, state, and local levels.

Your APAC organization will follow the AAPA and our profession, taking those first steps to lean into our new professional title of Physician Associates. The AAPA finalized the official change to the academy’s name to the American Academy of Physician Associates, Inc in September 2021. The APAC organization has completed our legal change last month November 2021 to the **Academy of Physician Associates in Cardiology**. We hope you will join your APAC organization as we continue the PA journey as Physician Associates in team-based cardiology practice to improve the lives of the patients in our communities.

Sincerely,

Viet Le, MPAS PA-C FACC FAHA

President

Academy of Physician Associates in Cardiology , Formerly Association of Physician Assistants in Cardiology