



Advanced Practice Provider

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Penn Orthopaedic Surgery Advanced Practice Providers (APPs) have been fundamental members of the Orthopaedic team for years. They deliver care to Orthopaedic patients on all levels of the care continuum. Our APPs work with the interdisciplinary care team to coordinate smooth transitions in care and work to provide patient and family centered care. They serve as key educators and train the future workforce of orthopedic APPs by precepting physician assistant students and lecturing.

Over the last year, our teams have continued to treat our patient population through the ongoing pandemic while adapting to the ever-changing policies in healthcare. Through this unprecedented time, the APPs continued to provide consistent quality care in a time where stability is not necessarily guaranteed. They continue to assist the department in increasing our volumes and access to care in a safe manner. The APPs have found ways to continue to utilize telemedicine where applicable while providing the majority of our patient care with in-person visits. They provide a constant presence in the patient care experience all while balancing their personal lives and some enduring life changing events such as marriage or children. I admire our APP team for their perseverance, commitment and loyalty to our departmental mission through this trying time.

Patient safety and quality improvement is a continuous goal for our advanced practice provider group. They have a strong collaboration with our clinical care teams to decrease readmission and mortality rates. APPs have worked over the last year to improve communications between our outpatient and inpatient teams to decrease mortality rates by increasing awareness of comorbid conditions pre-operatively. We have added a smart phrase into our history and physical template which clearly defines clinical predictors of cardiac risk. This initiative from the APP's has provided increased cognizance of surgical risk to not only our own providers but to anesthesia and our inpatient teams.

Our advanced practice provider team continues to grow year by year as we expand our department and recruit additional faculty members. We currently have 39 advanced practice providers within our department. In the past year, we have added several APPs to our group. Lisa Kelly PA-C joined our spine team to support Dr. Sheriff for our PMMG group. Talore Hooker PA-C joined our spine team as Dr. Rush Fischer's physician assistant. Talore came from Penn State Rehabilitation Center with 3 years of experience as a spinal cord injury PA. Rachel Jackson PA-C joined our spine team as a new graduate to serve as Dr. David Casper's physician assistant. Alissa Norris PA-C (new graduate) then joined as an additional spine PA

who supports Dr. Harvey Smith. We are thrilled to not only have a full APP team in the spine division but an excellent one at that!

This past year we also hired Kaitlin Freeswick PA-C to our shoulder and elbow team to support Dr. Gabe Horneff. Kaitlin comes with a couple of years of experience in orthopedics. Benjamin Chartier PA-C joined our foot and ankle division to support Dr. Ndu. Ben comes with several years of experience in Orthopaedic surgery. In addition, we added Megan Mellon PA-C as a new graduate to serve as Dr. Travers physician assistant. Claire Maxted PA-C also joined our team as a new graduate supporting Dr. David Tarity. Michael Colucciello PA-C is a new graduate who we have recently recruited to join our trauma division in the near future. We are all so excited to welcome our new APPs who have all been a great addition to our team!

In addition to new hires, we have also had some role changes within our APP group. With the recent departure of Dr. Huffman, Allison Huss has accepted a new role as an independent general Orthopaedic physician assistant. The new role aligns with her goals to be more autonomous and expand her knowledge in other fields of orthopedics outside of shoulder and elbow. Brian Fletcher continues to serve as an independent joints physician assistant but has also transitioned to support Dr. Keith Baldwin with his complex neuromuscular practice.

The Orthopaedic APPs continue to support the health system initiative of NPV access as well as general access to care. The majority of our APPs all run independent sessions which consists of post-operative patients, return and new patients; as well as minor procedures. Seeing the majority of the postoperative patient's allows the physician's more availability to see new patients to the practice. They are completing the history and physicals preoperatively and prepare the patients for surgery. In FY21 they saw a total of 4,085 new patients and 19,655 established patients for a total of 23,740 visits total. This number is very close to pre pandemic numbers which is outstanding!

In the face of a decrease in our resident and fellow numbers this past year, our APP's have stepped in to support our physicians in the operating room. All newly hired physician assistants are first assisting and covering the operating room with their attending physician.

The advanced practice providers of the Orthopedic surgery department are an exemplary group of practitioners. They go above and beyond each and every day to provide high quality care to our patients. I cannot thank this group of brilliant individuals enough and I look forward to another year of success with this incredible team!