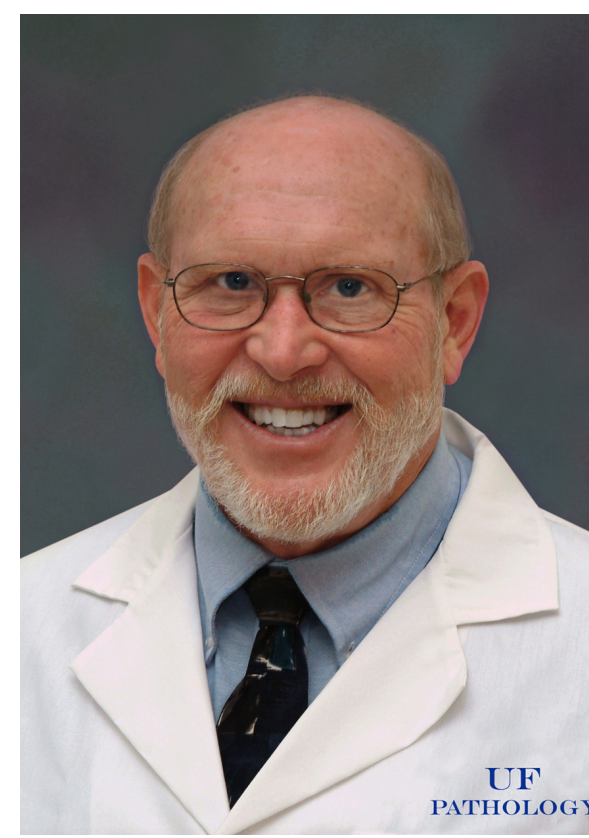


# Advocacy, Support, and National Recognition

## NAACLS accreditation of PA programs

In the early 1990's, the BOT investigated established accrediting agencies for the purpose of developing a more independent and credible accreditation process. In the end, they chose the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Lab Sciences (NAACLS) because of familiarity with their processes and protocols, as well as their familiarity with other medical lab science professions and the Pathology community in general.

In November of 1993, the BOT commissioned Steve Suvalsky and Jerry Phipps to participate in a NAACLS Accreditation Workshop in which the entire accreditation process was explained in a step-wise fashion for programs pursuing their initial accreditation, as well as those programs needing to renew accreditation. This experience provided us with information on how the Essentials/Standards were established, interpreted and utilized demonstrate evidence of compliance. This information was reviewed by the BOT and the Program Directors group (APATP) and, after all concerns were addressed, a decision was made to proceed with development of a PA Accreditation process with



Jerry Phipps

to



Training Program Directors, Virginia, 1994

### Accreditation process for PA training

The National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences board of directors voted last year to accept the *Essentials of Accredited Programs for the Pathologists' Assistant*, establishing an accreditation process for pathologists' assistant training programs.

The process, initiated by the American Association of Pathologists' Assistants and developed by the Affiliated Professions Accreditation Review Committee of NAACLS, received input from the College of American Pathologists and American Society of Clinical Pathologists. Adoption of NAACLS *Essentials* ensures a uniform standard of excellence for the training of pathologists' assistants.

For further information, contact the American Association of Pathologists' Assistants at 800-532-AAPA.

CAP TODAY, March 1996. Vol 10, No 3, p51

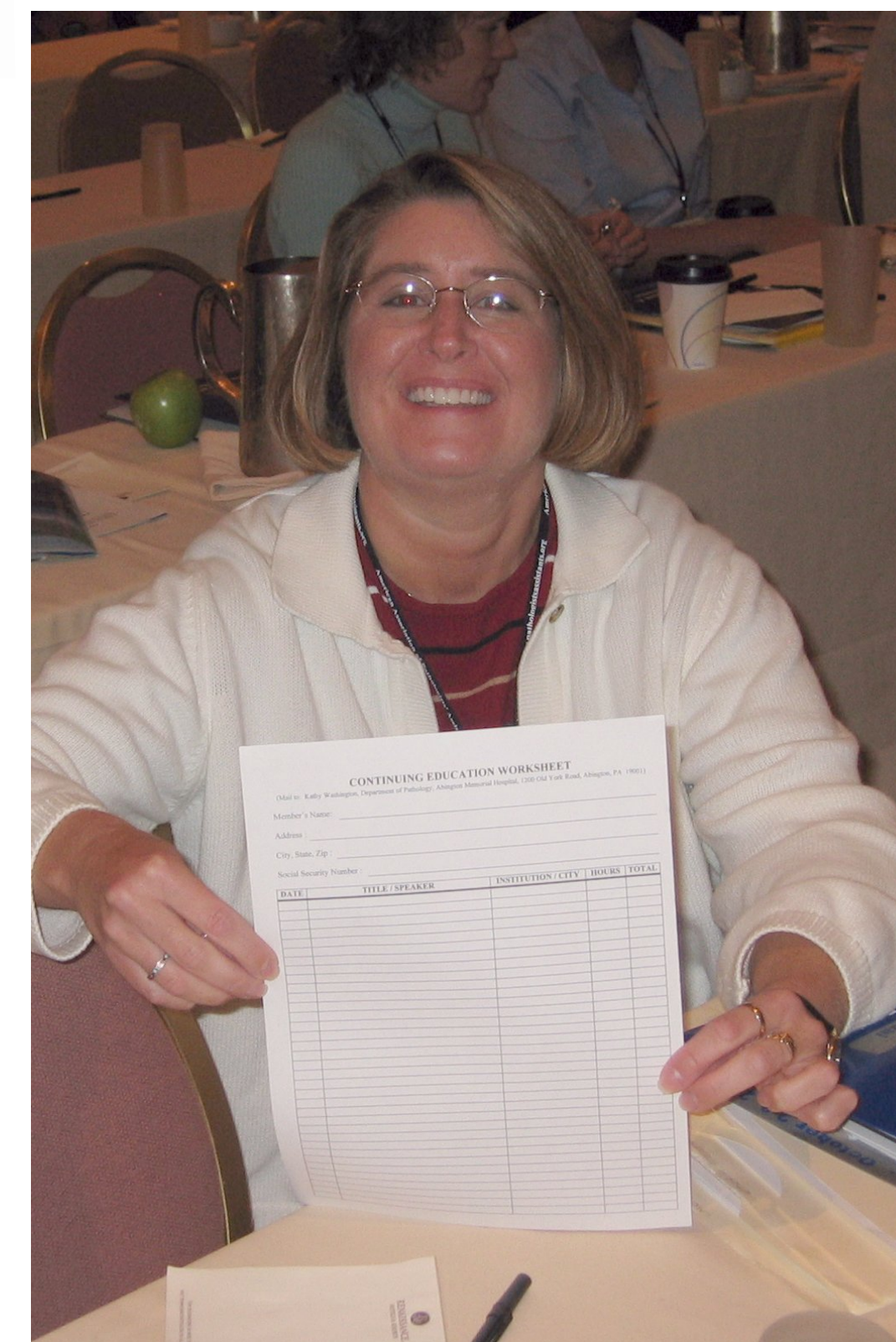


Program Directors and NAACLS representatives, Tuscon 1995

## AAPA becomes PACE provider

A CE program was established at the second annual meeting in 1976, and the AAPA Newsletter offered the first CE article in 1977. In 2000 the AAPA became an approved Annual Provider for CE Credits through the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Scientists Professional Acknowledgement for Continuing Education (P.A.C.E.). Participation in the P.A.C.E. program was instrumental in the AAPA achieving its education goals and added legitimacy to their CE program. Becoming an approved CE provider would also help eventually to satisfy requirements of the national certification on the horizon.

Reilly, TL and Wright, JR. A History of the American Association of Pathologists' Assistants: Creating an Organization, Winning Hearts and Minds, and Building an Invaluable Professions. *Acad Pathol*, 7 (2020)



Kathy Washington, Chicago 2004



Mike Sovocool and ASCP Representatives, Boston 2005

## ASCP Certification

In 2000, the "National Commission for the Certification of Pathologists' Assistants" was formed and held its first meeting in Toronto in conjunction with the annual AAPA meeting. The Commission was comprised of representatives from the AAPA, including the AAPA Fellowship Examination Subcommittee Chair and the Association of Pathologists' Assistants Training Programs as well as members of most of the major stakeholders in the practice of pathology.

In 2003, the Commission began to work with multiple vendors to request proposals for the support activities related to a certification program, such as legal, association management and examination development. Included among these vendors were the ASCP Board of Registry and the American Board of Pathology who were approached as "sole source" and "exam only" vendors.

The Commission developed two final business plans. The first was for an independent certification program to be overseen by the AAPA and the second for a conjoint certification program between the AAPA and the ASCP Board of Registry. The plans for the two business models were presented to the AAPA Board of Trustees in the fall of 2003.

In December of 2003, the AAPA Board of Trustees, after careful review of the Commission's findings, elected to partner with the American Society of Clinical Pathology Board of Registry. In 2004, the AAPA Board of Trustees and the ASCP Board of Registry developed a Memorandum of Understanding outlining the first national certification program for Pathologists' Assistants and the development of a membership category for pathologists' assistants in the ASCP.



Jim Moore

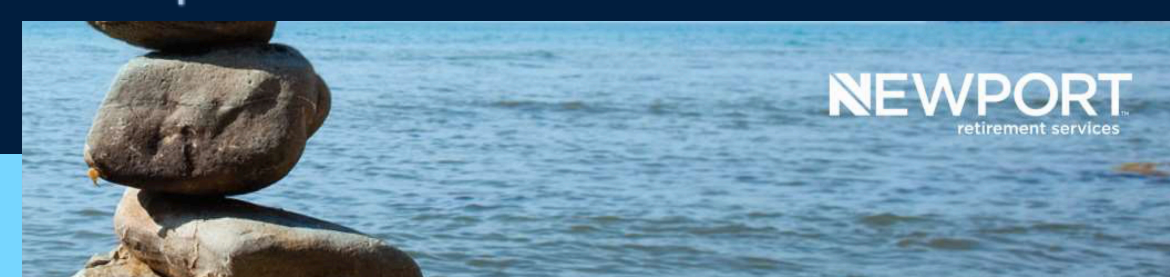


The inaugural ASCP certification examination for pathologists' assistants is administered in September of 2005 at the annual AAPA Continuing Education Conference in Boston, MA



## Future of the AAPA

With the establishment of the AAPA/ASCP BOC joint certification program, the new gold standard of nationally certified pathologists' assistants has been set. Since the ASCP BOC-issued certification examination has replaced the AAPA Fellowship Exam program as the measure of competency for NAACLS-accredited training program graduates, a major focus of the AAPA has become the provision of Continuing Education (CE) credits to its members. In 2001, the AAPA gained CE provider status through the Professional Acknowledgement for Continuing Education (PACE) program under the aegis of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (ASCLS). Since that time, we have been able to provide our membership with PACE-approved CE credits for attendance at our annual conference lectures and workshops, participation in quarterly journal quizzes, and attendance at other accredited institutional lectures and workshops. The AAPA will continue to be the primary provider of CE credits necessary to maintain professional certification status for the pathologists' assistant and will be the repository for tracking and maintaining records of CE accreditation for its members. The affiliation with the ASCP BOC has also greatly expanded the available sources of accredited CE activity for our membership.



2021 American Association of Pathologists' Assistants (AAPA) Membership & Salary Survey Report  
Administered by Newport Group Compensation Consulting Services



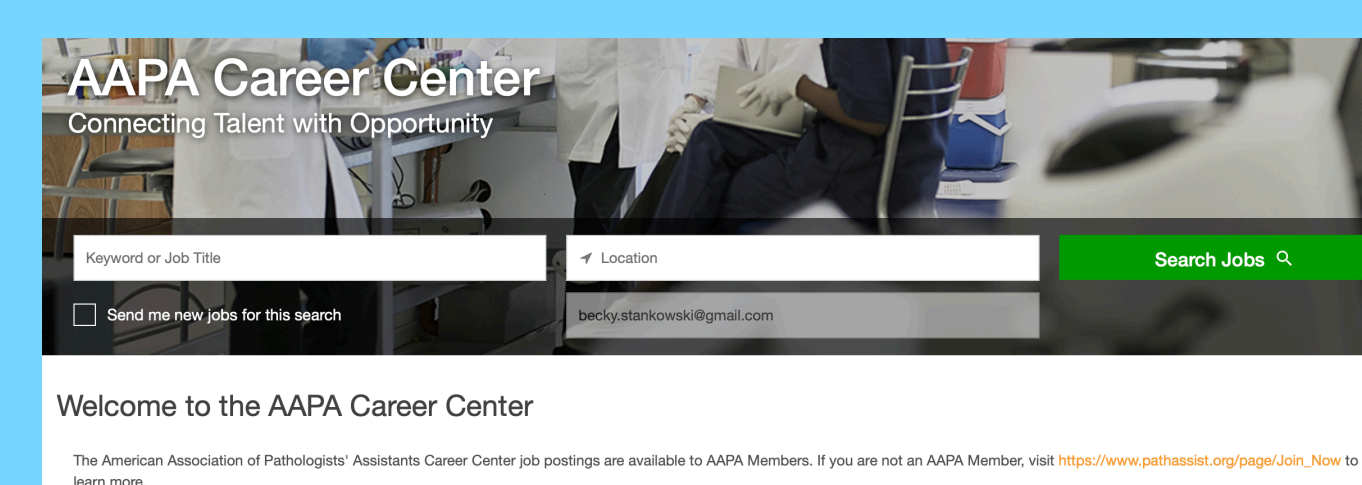
October 2021

NEWPORT

## LOOKING FORWARD

The AAPA continues to support its members, with the following benefits:

- Premier organization for pathologists' assistants providing PA-specific education and professional support
- The AAPA is at the forefront of pathologists' assistant networking, communication, job search, and resources specific to PAs whether they are students or have more than 20 years of experience
- Stay up-to-date with current Anatomic Pathology and Laboratory guidelines, technologies, and processes through the AAPA website, AAPA Twitter feeds, and the AAPA's Facebook page.
- Access to the AAPA Career Center for the most up-to-date and largest single source of PA-related job opportunities both nationally and internationally.
- Opportunities for all members, including students, to participate in member activities/committees to develop leadership skills.
- Access to current and archived member surveys to assist in job negotiations.
- Access to current and archived journals, quizzes, and pathologists' assistant specific articles and resources to improve your working knowledge and make positive changes in your lab setting.
- Access to a knowledge base and resource page created for members to regularly reference, with specific student resources such as scholarships, exam resources, CV help, and more.



## Forensic Task Force

There are potentially many opportunities for pathologists' assistants (PAs) to pursue a career in forensic pathology. With the ever-increasing shortage of forensic pathologists, attracting PAs to the forensic field could assist with this deficit. PAs are professionals with a unique skill set who can increase productivity in all aspects of the Medical Examiner's Office. As our scope of practice states, "Pathologists' assistants perform postmortem examinations including prosection, assisting the pathologist with rendering the provisional anatomic diagnosis, composing the clinical history, recording the macroscopic anatomic findings, and submitting tissue sections for microscopic examination." PA training programs offer comprehensive instruction in general and specialized techniques for performing postmortem examinations in both the hospital and medical examiner settings, with emphasis on the external examination, evisceration, and block dissection of the adult, perinatal, and pediatric decedent. Students also participate in forensic pathology practicums in Medical Examiner Offices throughout the country.

The AAPA's goal is to identify avenues for PAs to become involved as partners of the forensic pathologist. A task force, comprised of PAs with extensive experience in forensics, is examining how qualified PAs can be utilized in the forensic setting and how to best demonstrate these qualities to the forensic pathology community.

Task forces like this allow PAs to advocate for our profession and participate in meaningful discussions with other organizations. Get involved!

