Dr. Norman Goldstein, Editor  
April 25, 2003  
Hawaii Medical Journal

Dear Dr. Goldstein:

Physician Assistants have been a part of Hawaii’s health services delivery system since the early 1970’s. As part of the MD/PAs model of providing care, they have worked in Family Medicine, internal medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynecological practices, and emergency rooms. While they have been present in Hawaii for more than 30 years, their numbers have been and remain small, usually about sixty five at any one time.

With this letter, I am hoping to offer the medical community some basic information about the PA profession and to encourage Hawaii’s physicians to find out more. Since PAs are recruited out of the various ancillary health care professions, some HMJ readers may know someone they would like to nominate for training. My contact numbers are listed below.

- Physician Assistants are good for Physicians; they help carry the clinical load, they take calls, they provide coverage in the physician’s absence, they increase practice productivity and revenues, and reduce liability. Ask any physician with extensive experience with PAs...they’ll tell you.

- PAs are always supervised by physicians, though that supervisory responsibility does not necessarily require the Physician’s presence. The relationship between MD and PA is a legal and binding one; a kind of professional marriage. You can find PAs working with MD’s in virtually every realm where you can find physicians; if physicians do not work, PAs do not work. PAs are never directly reimbursed for the services they provide, they are most often paid as salaried staff.

- PAs reduce liability by providing the extra time a patient needs to feel cared about. They are trained to give a high priority to good communication, they chart better than most physicians, and the physician services provided by PAs are consistently of the highest quality by all measures; clinical outcomes as well as patient satisfaction.

- They are trained to practice medicine in “the medical model”, in programs emulating medical school, and in accordance with curricular standards set by the seminal national professional organizations in medicine, surgery, Ob-Gyn, etc. After graduation, they must pass a national board examination created with representation from the same organizations. More than half of the 45,000 PAs practicing nationally are in primary care settings, and nearly half have hospital privileges.

If readers of HMJ are interested in learning more, have a candidate to recommend for training, or would like to precept a PA student, they can call me at 808-965-3013, or E-mail me at [dandy@ilhawaii.net].

Sincerely,
Dan Domizio PA, MPH
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Pahoa, HI