

Director News

It is a pleasure to publish this year's RPAP newsletter. It has been an exciting year to assume the directorship of this program. We have our largest class ever launched—47 students. We have expanded our RPAP faculty, and, as you will see by their bios, they are a group with diverse interests, a wide array of accomplishments, and a passion for teaching in this program. Our students similarly are a diverse group with a common interest in exploring rural primary care.

During the past year, several of us have had the privilege of representing RPAP at national and international meetings. This program is considered a "foremother" of a host of other programs in the U.S., Canada, and Australia, all of whom are interested in longitudinal continuity clinical experiences for medical students, some in rural settings, and others in urban places. We have presented data now being published on our success in educating a rural primary care workforce for Minnesota.

Heather Danckwart, RPAP student at Zumbrota/Red Wing, on the day of a site visit.



One of our keys to success is our robust RPAP alumni base, many of whom have chosen to support this program as RPAP preceptors. Without these teachers we could not meet our mandate to educate our students in clinically rich settings across the state of Minnesota. We wish to continue to build our sense of community around this successful program.

Please make sure you forward us your most recent contact information, including e-mail, and let us share your news with others. Feel free to contact me about any ideas, concerns, or questions regarding RPAP and the Medical School's commitment to primary care (kdbrooks@umn.edu).

Kathleen Brooks, MD, MBA, MPA

RPAP Faculty and Staff

RPAP welcomes new and returning faculty members to the 2008-09 program year. This year we are happy to introduce Kathleen Brooks, MD, MBA, MPA, as the new RPAP director and Ray Christensen, MD, as the associate director. Therese Zink, MD, MPH, was appointed to the role of associate director of research and evaluation.

Kathleen Brooks, MD, MBA, MPA, is a family physician who joined RPAP in 2004. In spring 2008 she was appointed associate dean for primary care at the Medical School and director of RPAP. She is a "triple gopher," finishing her undergraduate degree, medical school, and residency (North Memorial) all within the University of Minnesota. She practiced family medicine with her husband



for a number of years in Crystal, Minnesota, has been involved in health policy work with Medicare and Medicaid, physician leadership education, and most recently was assistant dean for CME at the medical school. She continues her interest in health policy issues particularly those involving the Minnesota primary care workforce. She enjoys teaching medical students and family medicine residents.

Ray Christensen, MD, is a family physician and was an early preceptor for RPAP starting in 1974. Participating in this program as a rural physician and now as the associate director reflects his personal mission of "providing

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quality health care access to rural physicians." Dr. Christensen continues to work as a family physician in Moose Lake and provides ER coverage. He also currently works for the University of Minnesota Medical School as the assistant dean for rural health.



Ruth Westra, DO, MPH, assistant professor is chair of the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health in Duluth. She teaches many of the clinical activities for the first- and second-year Duluth medical students. She is course director for Introduction to Rural Family Medicine, the OB longitudinal course, and the Rural Academy of Leadership course. A family physician since 1977, Dr. Westra practices at the Gateway Clinic in Moose Lake. She has been RPAP faculty since 2006, completing site visits and counseling pre-RPAP students on the Duluth campus.



Gwen Halaas, MD, MBA, came to the RPAP program in 2003 as associate director after many years of teaching in and directing family medicine residency programs in Minnesota and practicing family medicine in St. Paul. As director of RPAP from 2004-2007, she learned much about the

value of RPAP training experience and began to publish articles, eventually with faculty partners, on the program outcomes and factors of its success. She continues as part-time faculty, making visits to the communities and supervising the community health assessment projects. Dr. Halaas is also the director of the Center for Interprofessional Education at the University of Minnesota Academic Health Center, developing learning experiences in which medical, dental, nursing, pharmacy, public health, and veterinary medicine students can learn with, from, and about each other to become better health care team members. Many of the RPAP communities have interprofessional practice and education projects in which RPAP students can become involved.



Keith Stelter, MD, MMM, has been RPAP faculty part-time since 1996. During that time he has seen the program change and evolve although it still holds its founding principles of demonstrating the joys and personal and professional growth that occurs in the rural practice of medicine. "I am indebted to all the community faculty members who make RPAP what it is—one of the finest educational experiences in the country." In



1986, Dr. Stelter was an RPAP student in Blue Earth and still maintains contact with his preceptor, Tom Watts, MD. In his clinical practice in Moose Lake and St. Peter, he was a community preceptor. Currently he has a 30% appointment with RPAP in addition to his role as associate director of the Mankato Family Medicine Residency Program. He continues to look forward to meeting the community faculty who give so much to the success of RPAP and to working with enthusiastic students committed to rural medicine.

Therese Zink, MD, MPH, joined the RPAP faculty in 2006. She is the associate director of evaluation and research. In addition to RPAP, she practices in Zumbrota, conducts research, and writes. The Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians recognized her research in the area of family violence this year with their "Researcher of the Year Award." She has worked with faculty in the family medicine department to analyze data collected about RPAP through the years. Her anthology, *The Country Doctor Revisited: A 21st Century Reader of Rural Health Care*, will be published in 2009 by Kent State University Press. This collection of poems, essays and stories is written by physicians, nurses, psychologists and students from across the U.S. and includes several selections from Minnesota writers. One of her stories was published in



the April 2008 issue of *JAMA*, "Thank Goodness for My Ass," a story about how her miniature donkey facilitated a conversation with a family of a nursing home patient. She also works with RPAP students to write about their experiences and publish them.

Bill Fricke has worked in RPAP since 1995 and has been program administrator since 2005. He oversees curriculum implementation, online curriculum web sites, student and site recruitment, and grades, as well as scheduling faculty travel to RPAP sites. His knowledge of the program's history is vast, and he dispenses advice to RPAP students and faculty from his office in the Mayo Building. He has helped to shepherd over 470 students through the program and on to residency and beyond. He freely admits to crying at each Medical School graduation and is immensely proud of the students with whom he has worked.



Michelle Mauch started with RPAP in June 2008 as executive assistant for Dr. Brooks. Michelle assists with RPAP administrative duties and is responsible for editing medical student performance evaluation letters, and drafting and editing the RPAP newsletter.



AAFP Features Former RPAP Students

At the 2008 American Academy of Family Physicians Annual Meeting and Scientific Assembly in San Diego, people associated with RPAP made a fine showing. Research presentations by two former RPAP students who worked with **Ruth Westra, DO, MPH** were on display. **Karen Myren**, a fourth-year medical student, presented the results of her research, "Prevalence of Surgery Due to Incontinence Following Vaginal and Cesarean Section Delivery." Karen's project, one of only five by medical students nationally selected for presentation in San Diego, was awarded third place at the meeting. **Libby Wagner, MD**, first-year family medicine resident at the University of Minnesota St. John's Hospital program, presented her research "Trends in Obstetrical Care in Rural Minnesota." Wagner's work also was recognized as the most interesting paper by attendees at the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians Annual Research Day in April.

Another former RPAP student, **Erik Brodt, MD**, was among 20 U.S. family medicine trainees selected this year to receive the AAFP/Bristol Meyers Squibb Award for Excellence in Graduate Medical Education. Brodt is a third-year resident with Swedish Cherry Hill family medicine program in Seattle, where he was named resident of the year. Congratulations to all.



L-R, Jim Boulger, PhD, Karen Myren, and Ruth Westra, DO, MPH, shown at AAFP with Karen's poster.

RPAP presentations and publications

Student Publications

Publications of Reflective Opportunities During RPAP

Students who have interesting stories that address a universal issue related to education, health care, or being a physician have the opportunity to work with Therese Zink, MD, MPH, to edit/publish their stories and share them with a broader audience. For information contact Dr. Zink, zink0003@umn.edu, 612-625-9197.

Class 2004-05

Brodt E, Ghost dancers. Included in *The Country Doctor Revisited: A 21st Century Reader of Rural Health Care*. In press.

"Three minutes and thirty seconds remained in the fourth quarter of the Minnesota Section 6A boys' basketball final. Showcasing a fake plant step, our All-State point guard sends his opponent to the floor again..."

Class of 2005-06

Frerks T. Dressing change. *Family Medicine*. In press. Included in *The Country Doctor Revisited*. Read at 2006-7 orientation.

"I glanced at the patient chart—only name, Mrs. Olson, age sixty-six years, and the vitals—normal temperature and blood pressure..."

Class of 2006-07

Ercole C. Pursuing the American dream. *Minnesota Medicine*, Feb. 2009. Included in *The Country Doctor Revisited*. Read at 2007-8 orientation.

"As I picked up my morning fruit from the doctors' lounge, the day's newspaper headline jumped out: 'Illegal Immigrant Kills Passenger and Injures Daughter in Car Crash.' Rosa Hernandez, a patient I had seen in the clinic..."

Licari A. Waiting. *Academic Medicine*, March, 2008.

"With much difficulty, my husband and I decided that I would spend my third year of medical school 200 miles from home..."
Kroening E. Learning from an Amish birth. *Family Medicine*. February, 2008. Included in *The Country Doctor Revisited*.

"Finally the day was done; I'd been up 36 hours and could not bear the thought of doing one more thing...my cell phone bleated. Rita, the midwife, said, 'One of the Amish families is in labor at home'..."

Lelonek M, Zink T. First code. *Minnesota Medicine*, August 2007.

"The frail, 86-year-old retired farmer slouched in the plastic chair in the exam room next to his plump wife. 'Something's not right,' he mumbled..."

Hoody D, Hanson S, Carter D, Zink T. Dramatic response due to the implementation of a stroke system of care: Case report from Granite Falls and protocol review. *Minnesota Medicine*, Oct. 2008

"P.H. is a 62-year-old male who presented to the emergency department (ED) at Granite Falls Municipal Hospital in Granite Falls, Minnesota, with the sudden inability to speak and paralysis in the right side of his body..."

Schoonover K. Blood, prayers, and stepping stones. *Minnesota Medicine*, December 2008.

"A teenaged girl lay on a back board with her head strapped in a cervical head stabilizer. Her mother stood next to her in the emergency room, concerned but not hysterical..."

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Achievements

Former RPAP students who received the Alpha Omega Alpha Award at the 2008 Medical School commencement were **Joanna M. Burns, MD, Devon R. Dannen, MD, Daniel G. Hoody, MD, Megan M. Lelonek, MD, David E. Polzin, MD, Natalie R. Roeser, MD, Joseph W. Rohrer, MD, and Matthew A. Taintor, MD.**

Receiving the Gold Humanism Award at the commencement ceremony were former RPAP students **Shannon G. Bradley, MD, Amanda L. Hoffman, MD, Ramsey E. Peterson, MD, and Elizabeth J. Wheatley, MD.**

Match Day 2008 Results

The University of Minnesota Medical School residency Match Day was held on March 20, 2008, at the McNamara Alumni Center. There were 46 students in the 2006-07 RPAP class (with two students deferring residency, and two students postponing graduation until 2009). Of the 42 students from the 2006-07 program year who matched, 69.04% of students matched in primary care specialties, 52.38% matched in family medicine, 9.52% in internal medicine, 4.76% in medicine/pediatrics, and 2.38% in pediatrics.

Class of 2008-9 begins RPAP experience

The 38th RPAP class began their RPAP experience on October 6, 2008, following a three-day orientation on the Twin Cities campus. Forty-seven students comprise the class of 2008-09, bringing the total number of RPAP participants to 1255 since 1971. Twenty-four students are from the University of Minnesota Medical School - Duluth, and twenty-three students from the Twin Cities campus.

RPAP Class of 2008-09

Mary Bassing (Grand Rapids)

Nathan Beerling (Waconia)

McKenzi Burmeister (Bemidji)

Amanda Carlson (Willmar APMC)

Jessica Christensen (Hastings-Regina Clinic)

Daryn Collins (New Ulm)

Heather Danckwart (Zumbrota/Red Wing)

David Danielson (Redwood Falls)

Christine Desautels (Princeton)

John Egan (Monticello)

Jason Eggers (Fergus Falls)

Linnea Engel (Winona)

Sancia Ferguson (Willmar- APMC)

Adam Foss (Waconia)

Ryan Gaalswyk (Staples)

Brett Glawe (International Falls)

Rachel Gramith (Glencoe)

Andrew Gunderson (Brainerd)

Matthew Healy (Hastings- Allina Clinic)

Charles Johnson (Northfield)

Jeremy Johnson (Cambridge)

Aaron Jordan (Moose Lake)

Bobby Karp (Sandstone)

Kirsten Klevan (Owatonna)

Austin Krohn (Aitkin)

Jennifer Kyuava (Olivia)

Kirstin LeSage (Detroit Lakes)

Heather Licke (Hibbing- SMD)

Phillip Lindholm (Luverne)

Jonathan Lofgren (Brainerd)

Erin Louks (Mora)

Mikal Nelson (New London)

Peter Olsen (Owatonna)

Joshua Overgaard (Cloquet)

Maiken Overton (Buffalo)

Michael Parrott (Pipestone)

Tessa Pierson (Grand Rapids)

Wendy Rangitsch (Lake City)

Jennifer Sauter (Virginia)

Ryuan Scheurer (Buffalo)

Nicole Smith (Mountain Iron)

Dustin Sperr (Willmar-FPMC)

Bryan Sundin (Little Falls)

Nicole TePoel (Ely)

Nicole VandenBerg (Hutchinson)

Jennifer Vesely (Crosby)

John Vukelich (Cloquet)



RPAP students at orientation

The RPAP Student and Preceptor Achievement awards for the 2007-08 program year were presented at the annual RPAP student orientation luncheon held at the Campus Club in Coffman Union October 1, 2008. Mark Hepokoski (Grand Rapids, '07-08) and Roger Lindholm, MD, were the recipients.

The RPRP Student Achievement award is given to an outstanding RPAP student at the completion of the program year. Excellence in academic accomplishment as measured by evaluations from preceptors and University and RPAP faculty, as well as noteworthy community involvement are the criteria on which the selection is based.

Mark Hepokoski was raised in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, and graduated from the College of St. Scholastica in 2004 with a degree in chemistry. He spent the 2007-08 RPAP year in his hometown of Grand Rapids and excelled in his clinical and academic activities.

In addition to his numerous hours working in the clinic, the hospital, and a nursing home, Mark also spent time coordinating an Olympics event at the nursing home, gave talks to preschool children about heart anatomy and heart health, and presented to parenting classes. His major achievement was to help facilitate a weight loss program at a local manufacturing company which resulted in an accumulated loss of over 1500 pounds by the employees. Mark's preceptor, Tim Pehl, MD, nominated him for this award.

The RPAP Preceptor Achievement award is given in recognition of outstanding contributions to medical student education as a preceptor for the RPAP program. It is our pleasure to announce **Roger Lindholm, MD**, as the recipient of the "RPAP Preceptor Achievement Award" for the 2007-08 RPAP program year.

Roger Lindholm, MD, left, New Ulm Medical Center, received the 2007-08 RPAP Preceptor Achievement Award. Dr. Lindholm is pictured with Kathy Brooks, MD, RPAP director.



Outstanding student and preceptor named

Dr. Lindholm is a graduate of the University Of Minnesota Medical School and an RPAP alum (Willmar, 1985, Family Practice Medical Center). He has participated as an RPAP

preceptor in New Ulm since 1993 and has since hosted 16 RPAP students.

Dr. Lindholm's student, Andrea Zeug nominated him for this award. She commented, "I could

not have asked for a better preceptor-student pairing than what I received with Dr. Roger Lindholm. I knew that by reputation, RPAP family physicians tend to be warm and approachable, while embodying a passion for teaching. Dr. Lindholm doesn't just possess these qualities, he defines them."

In his role as a community doctor, I have observed the brilliance that materializes when compassion, hard-work, and activism marry. No doubt, Dr. Lindholm exemplified the combination of these traits on numerous occasions."

Mark Hepokoski, left, who received the 2007-08 RPAP Student Achievement Award, is shown with Teri McIntyre of the Minnesota Medical Foundation, right.



Med 2010

The University of Minnesota Medical School is undertaking a comprehensive transformation of medical student education called MED 2010, a program of learner-centered education for patient-centered care.

In the future, a student's curriculum will not be based

on time in school, but on an achievement of competency in specific areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes which Medical School faculty decide an individual student needs to receive an MD degree.

MED 2010 will focus on individual pace and achievement, giving

students the opportunity to accelerate or decelerate their pace through Medical School in order to explore opportunities which will make them more successful residents. The MED 2010 medical student program will integrate clinical sciences and scientific foundations throughout

the program, changing the curriculum model to reflect this integration.

The Medical School is committed to the RPAP program which will continue to be a part of the curriculum of MED 2010.

Research

We are working hard to spread the word about RPAP's 37 years of success. A recent *Journal of Rural Health* included two articles about RPAP. The first article, "Recruitment and Retention of Rural Physicians: Outcomes From the Rural Physician Associate Program of Minnesota," presents RPAP's high rate of success at graduating students who chose rural primary practice. On average, 82% of RPAP graduates have chosen primary care, and 68% chose family medicine. Of those graduates currently in practice, 44% have practiced in a rural setting all of the time, 42% in a metropolitan setting, and 14% have chosen both, with more

than 50% of their time in rural practice.

The second article, "The Rural Physician Associate Program: The Value of Immersion Learning for Third-Year Medical Students," examines three years of students' essays and logs about the RPAP experience. An article about RPAP students' education related to professionalism will be published in the journal *Medical Teacher*. Contact the RPAP office for copies (rpapumn@umn.edu).

This summer RPAP partnered with Diann Eley, PhD, director of research at the Rural Clinical

School, School of Medicine, University of Queensland, Australia, in a study that examines the role of temperament and character traits in the recruitment and retention of the rural medical workforce. Dr. Eley's work investigates the psychological profile of rural doctors to better understand the traits they possess that influence their decisions to stay in rural medicine. The RPAP class of 2007-08 was invited to complete an on-line survey and participate in interviews, and the next three RPAP classes will also be invited to complete the survey during orientation.

RPAP received \$14,000 from the MN Medical Foundation to compare the test scores (MCATS, Step 1 and 2 scores, shelf exams, and OSCEs) of RPAP and Twin Cities campus students since 2000. Little has been published about how students who are educated in an apprentice-mentor style perform.

Preliminary work by David Power, MD, MPH, Walter Swentko, MD, MS, and Gwen Halaas, MD, MBA, comparing a group of 30 RPAP students with their metro colleagues suggested that the students were equivalent. The larger study is important for demonstrating RPAP's track record.

Student Publications continued from page 3

Class of 2007-08

Mattke A. Call it what it is: Sexual harassment. *Academic Medicine*. In press.

"Sexual harassment is very real in the medical world. Fear of the repercussions of reporting it is very real. It is comfortable to believe that in our lofty profession, we have moved

beyond it. We have not. While we may have developed an appropriate intolerance of the more overt forms of sexual harassment and discrimination, the subtler, more insidious forms that we tolerate (and even expect) are just as damaging..."

Howell J. In the face of uncertainty. Submitted, 2008. Read at 2008-9 orientation.

"I pulled back the plunger sucking the lidocaine from the bottle into the syringe. Jimmy Roy had a sebaceous cyst on his back that I was preparing to lance..."

Donovan C. Babies having babies. *JAMA*, 2008;300(15):1739-1740.

"Week by week I watch Sarah's belly grow. Accompanied by her mother, they are prompt for all of Sarah's prenatal visits. The 35-year-old mother and the 15-year-old girl sit side by side..."

In Memorium

Lyle Munneke, MD, passed away November 10, 2007, in Willmar.

Dr. Munneke was a preceptor for RPAP from 1972 to 2002. He served on various medical school and department committees and was known as a champion for rural and patient-centered care.



The Willmar Family Practice Medical Center and the University of Minnesota Medical School - Duluth created a scholarship in his honor which will be awarded to a Duluth student interested in rural primary care.

Jack Verby, MD, RPAP founding father, died October 23, 2007.

"Because of Verby's leadership, Minnesota faces less of a shortage of rural primary care physicians than anywhere else in the country," says Macaran Baird, MD, MS, head, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health. Baird adds that Verby was an excellent mentor, advising students and colleagues to balance their professional and personal lives.



Dr. Verby joined the University of Minnesota Medical School faculty in 1968 and retired from the University in 1993. He is remembered for his role in the creation of RPAP.

MAFP Awards

This year the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) selected former RPAP student **Erik Kanten, MD**, ('83 Arlington) of Crookston as the 2008 Minnesota Family Physician of the Year.

Two RPAP faculty members also received awards this year. **Therese Zink, MD, MPH**, was awarded Researcher of the Year, and **Gwen Halaas, MD, MBA**, received the Teacher of the Year award.

Former RPAP student **Joanna Burns, MD**, received the Medical Student Award for Contributions to Family Medicine.

L-R, Therese Zink, MD, MPH, Gwen Halaas, MD, MBA, Joanna Burns, MD.

Alumni News

Brian Bunkers, MD, (Fairmont '86) was selected as the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians 2006 Family Physician of the Year.

The following alumni news items were shared via the recent RPAP questionnaire:

Basil C. LeBlanc, MD, (New Ulm '81) became the state surgeon for the Minnesota Army National Guard in 2007. He has had deployments to Kosovo and Iraq.

M. Joseph Walz, MD, (Marshall '81) is the medical director of the emergency department at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Brainerd.

Jamie Pelzel, MD, (Northfield '98) completed a cardiology fellowship in June 2007 and joined Central Minnesota Heart in St. Cloud.

Kurt Angstman, MD, (Canby '84) was named medical director of Mayo Clinic Department of Family Medicine, Rochester, in March 2008.

Steven Sween, MD, (Marshall '77) is chair of the Department of Anesthesia, St. Joseph's Hospital, Atlanta, Georgia; chair of the Surgical Services Executive Committee; chair of the Critical Care Committee; and chair of the American Society of Anesthesiologists Board of Directors.

Hugh Renier, MD, (Bemidji '80) has been the vice president of medical affairs at St. Mary's Medical Center since 1996. He is a member of the board of directors of the Institute for Clinical System Improvement and a member of the Physician Engagement Advisory Group of the Joint Commission.

Robert Milligan, MD, (Canby '78) was elected president-elect of the Minnesota Medical Directors Association.

Harvey Frank, MD, (Montevideo '72) is the medical director of the Allina Forest Lake Clinic.

Vicki Anderson, MD, (Cloquet '73) received the Thomas A. Stolee Exceptional Dedication to the Practice of Medicine Award from the Lake Superior Medical Society.



Rural Physician Associate Program
University of Minnesota Medical School
Department of Family Medicine and Community Health
Mayo Mail Code 81
420 Delaware St. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455



Request for RPAP news and pictures

Please send us news and information as it happens throughout the year so that we will be able to add it to our upcoming newsletter. We need your e-mail address to continue corresponding with you as postage is a significant budget concern. Please send your email address to

roda0015@umn.edu or rpapumn@umn.edu

with any updates to your home, family, residency, or practice status.

You may also keep in touch through the RPAP Facebook group—join us at:

www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=47748601929

Rural Physician Associate Program

University of Minnesota Medical School
Department of Family Medicine and
Community Health
420 Delaware St. SE, MMC 81
Minneapolis, MN 55455

612-624-3111

Fax: 612-624-2613

Email: rpapumn@umn.edu

Web: www.rpap.umn.edu

Editor:
Michelle Mauch

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