

OAPA NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY
2026



A Career of Service Across Generations

Charles O'Leary, PA-C—Oklahoma's Oldest Actively Practicing Physician Assistant—Reflects on 50 Years of Medicine, Military Service, and Community Care

After 50 years as a physician assistant—and over five decades of military and community service—Charles “Doc” O’Leary, PA-C, continues to practice medicine with the same sense of purpose that shaped his earliest clinical years. Now recognized as the oldest actively practicing physician assistant in Oklahoma, O’Leary remains in clinic for more than 30 hours each week, providing family medicine and veteran-focused care in rural northeastern Oklahoma.

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Oklahoma's Smart Investment in Health Care: How HB2584 Helped Unlock One of the Nation's Largest Workforce Grants

Keith Plummer, PA-C

Oklahoma has received rare and welcome news: our state has been awarded one of the largest health workforce grants in the nation—the fifth largest overall—through the new Regional Health Training (RHT) initiative. This major investment will expand health care training pipelines, strengthen clinical education, and help bring more providers to the communities that need them most.

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The Oklahoma legislature formally convened the Second Session of the 60th Oklahoma Legislature on February 2nd. Governor Kevin Stitt delivered his eighth and final State of the State speech. In his speech, he outlined his priorities to include freezing property tax growth, improving education, removing the spending cap on the Parental Choice Tax Credit, limiting tribal sovereignty and repealing the medical marijuana law.

In the House, they begin the 2026 session with three members who were not representatives in 2025 plus three vacancies, one of which will be filled later this month. New members in the House include Reps. Amanda Clinton (D-Tulsa), Kevin Norwood, R-Owasso, and Aletia Haynes Timmons, D-Oklahoma City. Since last session, three House members have resigned: Reps. Ty Burns (R-Morrison), Forrest Bennett (D-Oklahoma City, and Ajay Pittman (D-Oklahoma City).

The Senate begins the 2026 session with the same 48 members who were there for the end of the 2025 session.

On the OAPA front, as you are aware we successfully passed major revisions to the PA Act in 2025. However, this session, we will only be pursuing legislation to clean up some of the policies already established last session. We haven't been assigned a bill number, yet, but key elements to be addressed in the OAPA cleanup bill include:

Prescriptive Authority

- Clean up to align PA and APRN prescriptive authority with the language passed in the 2025 legislation.
- Medical Board recommendation regarding pharmacies relying on the Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision list of physician assistants who have reported completion of six thousand two hundred forty (6,240) or more postgraduate clinical experience hours described in this section when presented with a prescription for controlled medications in Schedules III through V drugs. A physician's name is not required on a prescription for controlled medications in Schedules III through V written by a physician assistant who is verified by the Board for practice independent of a physician.

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ... CONTINUED

Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Act

- Clean up to align PA and APRN prescriptive authority with the language passed in the 2025 legislation.

Jurisprudence Exam

- Medical Board recommendation to clarify that an applicant for PA licensure shall take and complete the jurisprudence examination upon initial licensure or upon an application to reenter practice.

Physician Assistant Act

- Medical Board recommendation regarding modifying the PA Advisory Council to address the Program Directors serving on the PA Advisory Council.

It's an honor for your lobby team to represent OAPA members at the state Capitol and we appreciate your continued interest and engagement. We'll continue to keep you updated as the 2026 proceeds.

Jan Loftis

Matt Latham

Tyler Powell

Matt Ball

Brookes Wright

Jason Dunnington

Jami Benda

DID YOU HEAR THE EXCITING NEWS?

The 2026 U.S. News and World Report best job rankings have the PA profession at the #2 Best Health Care Job. The profession was also named the #4 Best STEM job and #5 among 100 Best Jobs across all occupations.

PA
#2
BEST HEALTH CARE JOB!

[**READ MORE**](#)

SPEAKERS BALL 2026

On Sunday, January 25, 2026, the Oklahoma Speakers Ball brought together state leaders, legislators, and community members for an evening of celebration ahead of the upcoming legislative session. The Oklahoma Academy of Physician Associates (OAPA) was well represented, with PAs Don Guthrie, Gavin Christie, and Audra Ball in attendance, along with Sandra Harrison, Executive Director of the Oklahoma State Medical Board. The Speakers Ball is always a wonderful opportunity to welcome newly elected state officials and celebrate the start of the legislative session, while also providing PAs a valuable chance to network with key legislators.

This year's theme, red, white, and blue, commemorated America's upcoming 250th birthday, or semi-quincentennial, this July. Despite a cold and snowy evening that made travel challenging for many, attendance remained strong. Proceeds from the event benefited the Oklahoma Warrior Honor Flight, an organization dedicated to recognizing American veterans for their sacrifices and achievements by flying them to Washington, D.C., to visit memorial sites in their honor. Although the weather posed challenges and attendance was somewhat lower than usual, OAPA was still able to make meaningful and fruitful connections with community and state leaders.



STAND UP FOR OKLAHOMA PAS

Every advancement in PA practice in Oklahoma has come from advocacy —and advocacy requires action.

Physician Assistant Political Action Committee (PAPAC) supports lawmakers who understand the value of PAs and fight for policies that protect our scope of practice, prescribing authority, and patient access to care.



Decisions made at the Capitol directly impact how you practice every day. PAPAC ensures PAs have a seat at the table before those decisions are made.

Even a small contribution makes a collective impact.

Donate to PAPAC — Protect the Future of Oklahoma PAs

Thank you for standing up for our profession.

[Protect
Oklahoma
PAs
Donate
Now](#)

JOIN YOUR COLLEGES IN DONATING ONLY \$10 A MONTH TO PAPAC!

Advocacy isn't just about introducing legislation to advance your profession — it's also about stopping legislation that could harm it. PAPAC funds help us do both. Join your colleagues and sign up to donate just \$10 a month to support and protect the future of your profession.

[Protect Oklahoma PAs — Donate Now](#)



BEING A PRECEPTOR IS REWARDING ALL THE WAY AROUND!

Being a preceptor is vital for shaping the next generation of PA providers by bridging the gap between classroom theory and real-world clinical practice. Mentoring a student is not only rewarding for the preceptor but also for the student that is enhancing their clinical and diagnostic skills, and preparing themselves to provide high-quality patient-centered care.

Oklahoma Preceptor Tax Credit (HB3351) was passed in 2024 allowing preceptors who train students to receive a nonrefundable income tax credit starting in 2026. Credits range from \$165-\$340 per rotation (up to 10 per year) and can be carried forward for five years. Preceptors of PA students will receive \$165 for each of the first, second, and third rotations and \$340 for for up to seven subsequent rotations. [Learn more here.](#)

CME Credit can be earned for PA preceptors in Oklahoma. Preceptors can earn 2 AAPA Category 1 CME credits per 40-hour week for each student they mentor, with NO LIMITS on total credits. [Learn more here.](#)



**BE A PRECEPTOR
TODAY! REACH OUT
TO ANY ONE OF
OKLAHOMA'S PA
PROGRAMS HERE!**



Physician Assistant History Society®
Honoring our History; Ensuring our Future

PAs Making History Every Day

By Bruna Varalli-Claypool, PAHx Board of Trustees

As a member of the PA History Society (PAHx) Board of Trustees, and the Oklahoma Academy of Physician Associates (OAPA), I would like to share a few of the resources the Society has available for the PA community. Our mission is to preserve the history of the profession and share it with the next generation of PAs, patients and policymakers. The PAHx has been fulfilling this mission since 2002. The PA-related information that is collected and donated to the Society is added to the PAHx Archives. Our Archives include a treasure trove of historical documents, artifacts, interviews, and much more that is featured on our [website](#) and included in the development of the Society's online educational resources, books, presentations, and historian workshops.

As a PAHx Trustee, I would like to encourage the OAPA to become an annual PAHx Associate, which would provide the OAPA membership with general archiving tips for preserving the rich history of the OAPA. As a PAHx Associate, the OAPA would have access to the Society's Historian Toolkit which outlines the importance of recording and preserving personal and state history. Please visit our website to learn more about the PAHx Associate program for PA constituent organizations here: <https://pahx.org/how-to-support-us/>

The PAHx would like to capture the PA stories from the OAPA membership. As we all know, PAs are 'making history by making a difference' every day throughout the community. Help the PAHx grow our collections by:

Ø drafting a biography written for either yourself or another PA. Please visit our website here for further details: <https://pahx.org/news/recommend-biographies-for-collection/>

Ø participating in a recorded interview to share your story or help interview another PA. Please visit our website here for further details: <https://pahx.org/oral-histories/>

Ø donating PA-related artifacts and papers to our archives and museum collections. If you would like to donate items to the PAHx, please first review the PAHx Collection Policy here: <https://pahx.org/pahx-collection/> and then email our Senior Archivist, Michelle Schabowski, with a list of your materials for review at: contactus@pahx.org

For all things PA history ... please visit the PAHx website regularly (www.pahx.org), check out our quarterly newsletters (<https://pahx.org/pa-history-society-newsletter/>), and stay connected with us on social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#)! Please don't hesitate to reach out to the PA History Society with any questions by emailing the team at: contactus@pahx.org.

2026 OAPA FALL CME CONFERENCE

OAPA 53rd Annual CME Conference

Sep 30 - Oct 2, 2026

Embassy Suites Downtown OKC
741 N Phillips Ave
Oklahoma City, 73104



Mark
YOUR
Calendar



Mark your calendars to join us at the beautiful Embassy Suite Downtown for this year's conference. This three day conference will be packed full of amazing CME, social events, networking, and MORE! Be sure to join is in-person! A hybrid option will be available as always.



**DON'T
FORGET**

FORM 5 AND FORM 6

If you have not filled out your FORMS, DON'T FORGET!

All practicing PAs with a delegating physician MUST fill out the NEW Form 5. It does not matter if you are writing for Sched II's (inpatient or outpatient) or not.

All PAs that wish to practice independently MUST fill out a Form 6. Independent Practice is NOT implied.

[LEARN MORE](#)