

# USD's Physician Assistant Program Prepares Veterans for Civilian Service

Training programs for physician assistants who provide indispensable health care to many rural areas trace their roots to Vietnam veterans looking for a meaningful career when their military service ended.

"If it weren't for veterans, there wouldn't be a PA profession," said Wade Nilson, chair of the physician assistant program at the University of South Dakota, which began in 1993.

The first class of PAs was assembled at Duke University in 1965 and consisted of four veteran Navy hospital corpsmen who already had received considerable medical training during their military service. The first PA curriculum was based on fast-track training of doctors during World War II.

Modern physician assistants attend many of the same classes as medical students but spend less time on their formal education because they are not required to undertake a residency. PAs now provide important health care services in all areas of every state, and opportunity forecasts for the profession are among the brightest in the employment sector.

Of the 390 PAs who have graduated from USD's program, 175 are working in South Dakota. The program



ALEX SHERLOCK

including Alex Sherlock, a former member of an elite naval group known as the SWCC (Special Warfare Craft Crewman) that supports SEAL units. During numerous secret assignments in eastern Asia, Sherlock piloted a special vessel that delivered and retrieved SEALs on various missions and also operated large weaponry on the craft.

"We did special operations that often involved direct actions, including capturing high-value targets," said Sherlock, a chief petty officer. "It was exciting stuff."

Another type of operation involved medical missions to help people in remote areas of the Philippines.

"We transported medical supplies

currently accepts 25 new students each year, and 20 of them must be South Dakota residents. A critical mission of the USD program is to provide rural areas with skilled health care providers.

Three military veterans are currently enrolled in USD's PA program, and doctors to rural villagers who desperately needed help," said Sherlock, who also provided security for the visiting physicians. "Those were among the most gratifying experiences for me while I was deployed, and those missions also got me thinking about medical service as a career."

Sherlock earned his undergraduate degree from USD in criminal justice before joining the Navy. He served in active duty for seven years and has been in the reserves since 2010. He started in the physician assistant program in 2014 and after a one-year clinical experience will graduate in 2016.

Sherlock, who is married with two small children, plans to work in a small-town hospital emergency room and also serve as a PA in the Navy Reserve.

"USD's program is terrific, but my military service was also invaluable. It showed me how to handle adversity and get things done," he said. "During duty in the Navy I learned how to be resourceful and resilient. My military experiences taught me how to be patient during tough situations. These attributes will serve me well in my work providing health care."

## State Panel Might Propose Assessing Agriculture Land On More Than Crop Ratings

PIERRE - The continuing push to ensure long-standing grasslands are taxed at fair rates in South Dakota rose to the top again Monday for the Legislature's task force on agricultural property assessments.

The panel also is considering asking for money for an update of soil ratings statewide.

Soil ratings are the foundation for South Dakota's productivity-based system for determining taxable values of crop and non-crop lands.

Depending on the area, agricultural land provides much of the tax revenue to pay for county government services and public schools, especially in South Dakota's many rural counties.

Fall River County director of equalization Susie Simkins testified Monday that approximately 36,000 grass acres in her county are taxed well above their actual productivity.

That is because they are used for grazing but have crop-rated soils.

Simkins urged that each soil type have ratings for crops and grass.

"You're charging him for corn when he's growing cows,

and I don't think that's fair," she said.

The task force is considering whether to offer legislation that would guarantee land that has been in grass for at least 40 years couldn't be assessed as cropland regardless of the soil type.

The decision whether to offer that measure and several others for the 2016 legislative session will come Dec. 7 when the panel meets for the final time this year.

Some farming organizations have fought against that type of protection in the past because tax burden would somewhat shift from grass acres to crop acres.

Sen. Jim Peterson, D-Reville, has sought protection of grass acres for much of the past decade because taxes can be incentive for producers to plow up grass and convert to crops. He is serving as chairman of the task force this year.

"We appreciate all the hard work you have done. Your commissioners should be proud of you," Peterson told Simkins.

Another of the measures facing the task force would appropriate \$175,000 for South Dakota State University to update soil ratings for the first time since about 1995.

## GIVING BACK



ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/FOR THE PLAIN TALK  
Vermillion Fire Chief, Shannon Draper and Keith Thompson, Captain / Rural Association President accept a donation from Jackie Williams of the Plain Talk/Broadcaster.

## UPNEXT



JACKIE WILLIAMS/FOR THE PLAIN TALK  
Wednesday was the first UpNext-Vermillion's Coffee Hour held at VCDC and it started out with great success. More than 30 Business professionals from the Vermillion area come to share coffee and learn of what was happening in the Vermillion area. This week's speaker was Bill Anderson - Vermillion Theatres and Vermillion Downtown Cultural Association Board President.

## Jolley

From Page 1

Jolley, but it's the whole community helping to support this."

For the program, every student keeps a log to track his or her own number of minutes spent reading at home. The minutes logged are in addition to assigned homework and the goal is to reach 1,000,001 collective minutes.

It is the second year for the program and this year a new element has been added: writing.

"We have a staff developer that's coming and helping to support us with writing," Galvin said. "We just thought that the teachers are getting some support with how to help kids to write to read and read to write and just tell them that both of those are essential life skills."

Fifth grader Maya Radigan addressed the school on the importance of being a good writer.

"It's important for them to write so that they can read better and if they want to grow up and be authors then they have a better chance of doing what they want and get into a better college," she said in an interview following the pep

rally.

The program is designed to simply have students engaged in literacy, whether that's reading alone, being read to by a parent, listening to a book on tape or however they can be involved in reading or writing.

"The kids will record how many minutes they engage in literacy at home," Galvin said. "Then we actually track every kid's progress, but we're staying on a team purpose, we're one team, one dream. It's not a competition against each other, it's like how can we work together as a collective group to reach this goal."

Radigan said she doesn't remember exactly how many minutes she read last year, but recorded some every day.

"I read by myself 20 minutes every night," she said.

Logs are then collected every Thursday by members of the USD basketball teams.

"The basketball coaches send basketball players every Thursday morning to go around to every classroom and then they mentor and coach the kids on the importance of reading and writing," Galvin said.

Last year, the school's 360 students read a combined 1,000,565 minutes, well passed the goal of 1

million, but this year's goal was raised by just one.

"We're really going to coach them, too, on being the one. Maybe you're going to be the one to get us to that one (minute)," Galvin said.

All the time spent reading won't go without rewards. Within the 1,000,001 minutes there are four benchmark celebrations that all involve reading. At the 250,001 minutes, students will invite guests into the classroom to read. At 500,001 minutes, each grade will vote on a location to take their reading on the road.

"They literally packed their books in their bag, took their game on the road and went to those places to read," Galvin said.

At 750,001 minutes, a celebration will be held at the school and for 1,000,001 minutes, students will be treated to recess inside the DakotaDome with the USD basketball teams.

For every 100,001

minutes read, a new piece of playground equipment will be installed at the playground at Jolley and for every 2,000 individual minutes, the student will have his or her name painted on the All Star Wall of Fame in the school's library.

The name "One Team, One Dream" was borrowed from the USD women's basketball team's motto during last season's Summit League championship.

"If you can just go with the philosophy of we're out to improve, so it's kind of like a basketball team," Galvin said. "Their goal is to make it to state and once they get to state they set different goals, like we're going to score this many points or something."

The reading program began last Friday and continues throughout the year until the goal 1,000,001 of minutes is reached.

"Last year, we were able to reach it by the end of March," Galvin said.

**80 PRIME ACRES • 2 HOMES • COMMERCIAL GRADE FEEDLOT • MORTON SHOP/BARN**  
**ABSOLUTE REAL ESTATE AUCTION**  
**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2015 • 10:00 AM**  
 Registration at 9:00 - Auction held at Hampton Inn & Suites, 85 US Hwy 16, BUFFALO, WY.  
 This well located property is situated 16 mi. SE of Buffalo along the North Prong of Bilderback Creek in the Big Horn Mountain foothills between I-25 & I-90. Two adjacent 40 acre parcels consist of gently rolling native buffalo grass pasture with about 30 acres of crested wheatgrass/alfalfa hay ground. Call Bradeen Auctions at 605-673-2629 or watch www.bradeenauction.com for complete terms and conditions, title commitment, showing dates, photos and maps.  
**BRADEEN REAL ESTATE & AUCTIONS**  
 Owners: Brandon Turner, Boyd Turner & Naomi Turner Family Trust  
 "Specialists in Real Estate Auctions"

What's Cooler than being cool?  
**COLD, HARD CASH.**  
 Save up to **\$2,250**  
**HURRY! Rebate offer ends soon!**  
 turn to the experts  
**Carrier**  
 Turn to your local Carrier® expert for complete details on all rebate offers and financing options.  
**Larry's HEATING & COOLING**  
 920 Broadway, Yankton • www.larrysheatingandcooling.com  
 605-665-9461 • 1-800-491-9461

## CPR

From Page 2

think of them as more frail but really, if anything they're not," he said. "Their bones are not going to break. They're more malleable because the cartilage is still there. The bones haven't ossified yet so actually pushing deep is still good. The only change between adults and children is they want you to give a couple rounds of CPR before you call 911. The reason for that is children usually go into cardiac arrest because they stop breathing so we really need to give them a couple breaths and circulate the blood and get the oxygen circulating then call 911. When adults go into cardiac arrest because of a heart problem their heart stops beating so we call 911 right away because they need a shock, they need a defibrillator to really fix the problem. AHA is saying people are usually pushing too shallow so they're still pushing the high-quality push hard, push fast type of compression."

Other changes in CPR guidelines don't affect the average citizen as they do emergency medical personnel.

"They want people to start using automated feedback devices," Wetherington said. "They have stickers that you put on the patient's chest and device will give feedback if you're pushing hard and fast enough. Obviously somebody who doesn't work on an ambulance or a hospital probably won't have access to that so that's kind of a downfall."

"The last thing they're pushing for is directive dispatchers," Wetherington continued. "They're really pushing for dispatchers to be what's called EMD certified which stands for Emergency Medical Dispatching. All the dispatchers in Vermillion are actually EMD certified so that basically means they're qualified to instruct you on how to give CPR over the phone. They can ask the questions to help you recognize if cardiac arrest is happening and they can talk you through the CPR process."

So, if anything, knowing how to call 911 is the most important thing for anyone needs to know.

"Early 911 is super important," Wetherington said. "There are, I think, 383,000 cardiac arrests each year. Those are out-of-hospital cardiac arrests. Out of those there is only a three to five percent survival rate. It's very low. The reasoning for that is people don't call 911 right away. What they really need is a hospital. Getting an ambulance going and getting them to a hospital as fast as they can is the best thing for them."

There are a few steps to recognizing if a victim needs CPR according to Wetherington.

"To identify if somebody is in cardiac arrest, the first thing we're looking for is if they're unresponsive," he said, unresponsive meaning they don't respond in any way to noise or painful stimulus. "The second thing we're looking for after that is if the patient is breathing. If that patient is not breathing, only gasping every couple of seconds that's not breathing effectively. We call that agonal breathing. Basically that's a sign of end of life. At that point you can start CPR."

You should never be hesitant to call 911 for your own sake as well as the patient's.

"A cardiac arrest is a very traumatic experience, not only for the patient but also for the person witnessing it," Wetherington said. "A lot of the time what I see is that people's adrenaline kicks in and they usually are pretty well-collected but it's good having that dispatcher to say, 'I need you to calm down, I need you to get down, are they breathing? No? This is what you need to do.'"

A lot of people are going to freeze and that's understandable. It's ok to freeze. Having that extra guidance is really beneficial."

CPR certification classes are held monthly at the Fire Station in Vermillion.

"If someone wants to set up their own CPR class they're more than welcome to do that," Wetherington said. "Shoot me an email or give me a call and we can absolutely set that up for you."

It only takes one four-hour class to become certified which is good for two years according to Wetherington. "I know that for people who run daycares the city will pay for your CPR certification," he said. "Check in with your workplace. Sometimes your employer will pay for you. It could be a safety write-off."

Available for free download is the Pulse Point AED app which locates local public access defibrillators.

"We have a public access defibrillator program here in Vermillion," Wetherington said. "We got a grant quite a few years ago and we were able to put an AED in every patrol car. Not only that but we have AED's placed in buildings throughout the community. Which is great but how are you going to know where one is? That's where this app comes into play."

Those interested in learning more about the new CPR guidelines can visit [cpr.heart.org](http://cpr.heart.org) or register for a local CPR class at [www.vermillioncpr.eventbrite.com](http://www.vermillioncpr.eventbrite.com).

**•••FOR SALE•••**  
**Pasture Ground**  
**1105.50+/- Acres Holt County South of Lynch, NE**  
  
**320 Acres Knox County Northwest of Verdigre, NE**  
  
 Call for details...  
**Bryan Knox 402-305-4870**  
**STOCK REALTY & AUCTION CO.**  
 Land Brokers and Auctioneers  
**1-800-WE SELL 8**  
**www.stockra.com**