Veterans Helped Launch Physician Assistant Concept USD's PA 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 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, 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 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."

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Serving Those Who Have Served

By Rep. Kristi Noem

We have a fundamental responsibility to care for America's veterans, but time and again, our efforts have fallen short. Recent years, in particular, have seen repeated instances of misunderstanding, mismanagement, and mistreatment when it comes to supporting our veteran community. Veteran suicides, for instance, occur at an average of about 22 per day. Tens of thousands remain homeless. In some areas, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has systematically ignored the urgent medical needs of our veterans.

And in South Dakota, we are caught in a years-long fight to keep the doors open at a Hot Springs VA hospital that veterans want and need. This is a facility that has served veterans for more than 100 years. Its position in the Black Hills provides a level of serenity that aids in the healing process – especially for those facing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury, and similar illnesses. Those who receive care there have lobbied hard to make sure it stays open, as has the community. Despite all this, the VA has incrementally depleted the number of services offered in Hot Springs and pushed forward a plan to close the facility altogether. This is not what our veterans want, nor what they deserve.

In late October, the VA released its draft environmental impact statement regarding the closure of the Hot Springs hospital. This is one of the final steps when looking to close a VA facility. The findings once again highlighted the dramatic impact a closure would have. The public now has at least 60 days to review and comment on the report before VA Secretary Robert McDonald issues a final decision. I've urged everyone who will be impacted to take part in this process.

George Washington said after the Revolutionary War had concluded that "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war ... shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by our nation." Closing the hospital in Hot Springs – even reducing its services as the VA is already in the process of doing – does not leave a positive perception.

I've been focused on writing and supporting legislation that better serves our state's veterans and their families. This includes provisions to stop the VA from closing the Hot Springs hospital as well as legislation to make it easier to fire VA employees who are failing to serve our veterans with integrity, efforts to improve mental health services for veterans, and bills to increase post-service job training. There is a role each of us can play in our communities too.

There is a role each of us can play in our communities too. This Veterans Day, I encourage you to touch the life of someone who has served. Bring them and their family a meal. Volunteer at one of the many veterans-centered charities in South Dakota – whether that's your local VFW, the American Legion, or another one. Attend a Veterans Day service. Or just tell them thank you. These women and men have put on our nation's uniform and stepped into danger for the sake of our country and the values we stand for. It's our responsibility to serve them when they return.

For 19th year USD fraternity raises funds, awareness for local children battling cancer

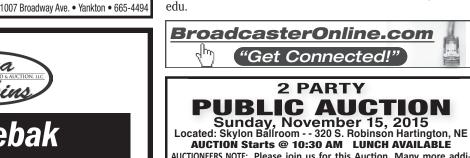
For the 19th consecutive year, the Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity (PIKE) at the University of South Dakota, will host the Thursday Night Live philanthropy event on Nov. 12. All funds raised will benefit local, courageous children battling cancer.

At 7 p.m., the stage will be set and lights will rise in Aalfs Auditorium in Slagle Hall. Admission is \$5 prior to the event and can be purchased at the Muenster University Center beginning on Thursday, November 5.

Thursday Night Live replicates the popular television show Saturday Night Live. The performance is open to all students, faculty and community. Nathan Christensen, a senior Kinesiology and Exercise Science major from Pipestone, MN, feels passionate about the work the USD PIKES have done for local children. "More than 100 college men have come together to make this event a success. We are honored to help Cure Kids Cancer and hundreds of local children as they fight for their lives," Christensen said.

Cure Kid's Cancer is PIKE's exclusive charity partner. Funds raised benefit local children battling cancer at Sanford Children's Hospital. Cure Kids Cancer is dedicated to finding life-saving treatments for pediatric cancer by raising funds and awareness for local children's cancer centers.

The USD PIKES have committed more than \$25,000 to Cure Kids Cancer. For Further information regarding Thursday Night Live, please contact chapter president Nathan Christensen at 507-215-5396, or Nathan.D.Christensen@coyots.usd. edu.



bp Broadcaster Press

Fill the puzzle so that every row, every column, and every section contain the numbers 1-9 without repeating a number.



Wreath & Holiday Decorating Contest Announced

Dakota Hospital Foundation (DHF) is pleased to announce the 2015 Wreath and Holiday Decorating Contest. Community members are invited to share your creative side and support an amazing cause!

DHF is pleased to expand our annual wreath contest with the ALL NEW Free Style Category. You are invited to submit a wreath or holiday décor item decorated to your personal style or theme of

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Vermillion would like to

The following items can be found at Vermillion High School, 1001 E Main, please contact Curt Cameron, Principal at 677-7035 or stop in at the High School:

- Classroom desks
- Free of Charge
 Lab tables
- Tables
- Wood/metal chairs
- Plastic metal chairs
- Wood teacher chair
- Computer desk
- Metal cabinet
- Study carrels
- Teacher chair
- Wood stool
- Folding table
- Circular table
 Computer desk
- Computer desk

The following items can be found at Jolley Elementary, 224 S University, please contact Sue Galvin, Principal at 677-7015 or stop in at Jolley:

- Two tray carts
- on wheels
- Rectangle tables
- Round table
- Trapezoid tablesProjection screen

choice. This new category provides for other fun items to be considered; such as center pieces, sprays, gift items, etc.

Decorated items must be submitted with a completed Contest registration form on Monday, Nov. 16 from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Participants may bring their holiday item to the Administration entrance at Sanford Vermillion - 102 S Plum Street. Special arrangements may be made for an earlier drop off if needed.

All holiday décor will be judged on several criteria including originality/creativity, arrangement, theme, and "WOW" factor. Prizes will be awarded in three categories: Best Individual entry, Best Business/ Organization entry and Best of Show. Due to the variety and uniqueness of entries as well as the new category, judges will also have the option to award additional prizes.

All contest entries will be auctioned at the Dakota Hospital Foundation Wreath and Holiday Décor Auction on Tuesday, Nov.17 at the Vermillion Event Center. Join us from 5-7 p.m. for a lovely evening with delectable hors d'ouerves, refreshments and socializing. The evening will include new ways for participants to purchase holiday creations followed by a live auction at 6 p.m. All proceeds from this event will support the Sanford Arts Program in Vermillion.

"This is a wonderful event for Dakota Hospital Foundation and the community. The new options this year will add another level of creativity and buying opportunities for all those in attendance," comments Linda Kogel, Vice President, DHF Board of Directors.

"DHF is committed to continue its support of Sanford Arts Vermillion. This annual contest and auction provides a wonderful setting for us to share the impact of this incredible program," concluded Kogel.

For more information, visit us at sanfordvermillion.org/ foundation.



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