



4 MINUTE READ

A Letter to Christian Physicians

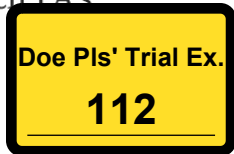


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by Christian Medical & Dental Associations

JonathanClemens,PA

Your Christian physician assistants, represented within CMDA by the Fellowship of Christian Physician Assistants (FCPA) specialty section, are caught in the middle of a transition. While it may just be an eddy in the class three rapids of healthcare evolution, the physician assistant profession has changed in the 12 years since I started PA school. Each PA's story will be different, but themes and similarities recur.

In the beginning, a PA worked for a physician. With extensive prior medical experience and accelerated training in the medical model, a PA



medicine with the goal of glorifying God by caring for the sick and injured, such motivations are at best tolerated.

- PAs can instead seek to sever our administrative ties with physicians. This is a strong preference among numerous PAs in the secular arena, sometimes driven by PA resentment that physicians have removed themselves from the relationship PAs depend on by selling their practices. The American Academy of Physician Assistants has adopted “Physician Associate” as the preferred title in an effort to maintain professional, but not administrative, ties with physicians. Others point to the administrative independence of nurse practitioners as something we need to match.

GET INVOLVED WITH FCPA

Are you a Christian physician assistant who wants to get involved with FCPA? We are always in need of faithful Christian PAs—from PA students to retired PAs—to serve in various capacities such as mentorship, missions and service. Mentors are welcome to join monthly group mentorship meetings where experienced CMDA members share knowledge with PA students and early-career PAs. FCPA is active at Global Missions Health Conference (GMHC), our members serve on Global Health Outreach (GHO) trips and we award grants to support member PAs and PA students’ short-term mission trips. FCPA is active at the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) as a caucus. We host an exhibit booth, morning devotionals and evening speakers each May at the AAPA national convention. Our members serve in various roles in the larger, secular organization, and we have a voice at its house of delegates. We welcome any other talent not represented here! To learn more, email us at fcpa@cmda.org or visit cmda.org/fcpa

Is there a third way? I hope so! I suspect most Christian PAs do.

As a Christian PA, I am at my best when I am working for a Christian physician. At least, I think I would be—I have never had the opportunity here in the United States. On short-term international missions, the collegiality of common Lordship has been such a blessing to me. I can only imagine how it would be in day-to-day life. A barrier to more PAs realizing this blessing is that as the PA workforce expanded, the number of Christian physicians in practice ownership has not.

So, what can Christian physicians do, other than starting new practices?

1. Mentor Christian PAs in your sphere of influence. While we graduate from PA school able to function on day one, we still need Christian physicians to teach us the art of Christ-centered patient care. If you want to help but don't know of any Christian PAs in your practice or area, contact us at fcpa@cmda.org and we'll connect you to one to mentor.
2. If you need a PA, hire a Christian one using CMDA Placement Services. The more Christian healthcare leaders seek to hire values-aligned employees, the better we can be at building environments that reflect Jesus' love. They can't guarantee you'll find the perfect fit, but you'll at least find someone serving the same Lord. For more information, visit www.cmda.org/placement.
3. Partner with Christian PAs. Some of us have ambitious, God-sized plans to improve healthcare through innovative service delivery, but we can't do it, by law, without a physician in the mix. The partnership of young, idealistic and enthusiastic PAs with seasoned, experienced physicians could do such great things for the kingdom.
4. Pray for the PA profession. The evolution of medicine has not been kind to the PA-physician relationship.

Thank you to those who are already doing this. Know that your involvement, care and guidance is a real multiplier of our efforts to provide care in Jesus' name.

For the Fellowship of Christian Physician Assistants, Jonathan Clemens, PA,
2022-2023 Chair

Jonathan Clemens, PA, practices medicine as a PA in Thurston County, Washington, where he currently splits his time between eating disorders

care with The Emily Program and occupational and family medicine at ErgoCare Clinic. Since his 2012 graduation from Pacific University's PA program, he has experience in urgent care, sleep medicine, pain management, travel medicine, medical ethics and rural primary care. Jonathan is currently a doctoral student at A.T. Still University's Arizona School of Health Science. Prior to PA school, Jonathan worked as a volunteer firefighter/EMT and as an information security specialist. He continues to serve as Chief EMS officer and teach EMT classes for his fire department.

(Exodus

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