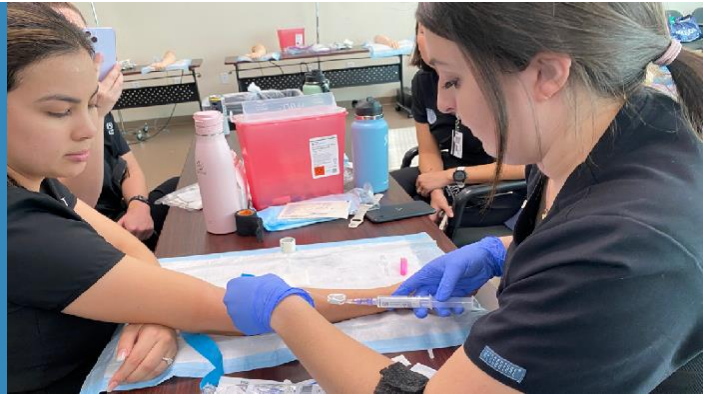


PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

FACILITATING A PROVIDER PIPELINE TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES



At a glance

A.T. Still University-Arizona School of Health Sciences' (ATSU-ASHS) community health center (CHC) partners

- 10 CHC partners (as of May 2026)
 - » Three to eight students per CHC
- Capstone project: **Community Health Improvement (CHI)** or **Quality Improvement in Healthcare (QIH)** drives student engagement in the community

Hometown Scholars program

- CHC partners identify members of the community to attend physician assistant (PA) school.
- Students may complete clinical-year education at CHC, contingent upon the existence of a current affiliation agreement

Clinical Rotations

6 weeks in each of the following:

- Family medicine
- Internal medicine
- Behavioral Health
- Surgery
- Emergency Medicine
- Pediatrics
- Women's Health
- Elective

Rural and primary care focused

ATSU-ASHS' PA program has been awarded a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration

- PCTE Rural Health Training

Excellent didactic preparation and clinical skills

PA students gain 14 months of didactic education prior to clinical rotations.

- Systems based
- Social determinants of health
- Communication drills
- Extensive clinical procedural skills education using advanced technologies and simulation

What is the role of a regional director of medical education (RDME)?

Each CHC partner selects an RDME to oversee students' clinical-year experiences, provide guidance, and coordinate logistical support necessary to ensure student success in meeting the requirements of the clinical-year curriculum, including mentoring and support of the student-led master's capstone project.

RDME qualifications:

- A prescribing clinician (preferably a PA, if available)
- Knowledgeable about organizational operations and personnel
- Able to develop and maintain relationships in the community to facilitate student experiences (e.g., hospital-based Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences or SCPEs)
- Able to provide administrative support and time necessary to fulfill the position's duties (average 10 hours weekly of protected time for the RDME and/or the RDME's administrative support staff)

RDME duties

Department faculty and staff provide mentoring and support for all required activities:

- Participate in student cohort selection via Zoom introductions, Q&A sessions, etc. (January-February)
- Orchestrate an orientation for the PA students to the campus and community (September)
- Oversee and facilitate proctoring of required assessments (written, practical, and verbal)
- Recruit and screen preceptors
- Develop and coordinate each student's SCPE (rotation) schedule for the year (June)
- Ensure student credentialing is completed for hospital rotations in the community
- Ensure preceptor obligations and deadlines are met, including credential paperwork, preceptor training, response to student check-in, and student performance evaluations

Kris Brunia

Executive Assistant, [University Partnerships](#)

5850 E. Still Circle | Mesa, AZ 85206

480.219.6016 | krisbrunia@atsu.edu



We want to hear from you!

PA Program: Regional Director of Medical Education (RDME)

Getting started

- Develop an informational presentation or video about your CHC to share with the didactic class ahead of their clinical year placement
 - These informational meetings occur in January/February, and the placement “spin” occurs in February/March

CHC Timeline for Incoming Clinical Year Students

- Present at Zoom CHC introduction meeting with current Didactic students - **Jan/Feb**
- Coordinate with assigned AT Still University Clinical Coordinator a meet and greet with students placed at CHC for the upcoming clinical year (**occurs after placement - April**)
- Recruit community preceptors for CORE and/or Electives, as needed based on availability of CHC preceptors - **Once LFA/affiliation agreement completed and ongoing**
- Develop the students’ schedules for CORE rotations. Electives may be scheduled based on when they occur in the students’ clinical rotation schedule or as the RDME determines is appropriate -**Spring/Summer**
- Hospital credentialing for hospital based and/or hospital affiliated rotations (EM, Surgery, WH, Electives, etc.) - **Once students have been placed with the CHC**
- Coordinate orientation for students on site. Usually scheduled for 1-2 weeks prior to the start of the Clinical year- **Fall, approx. early-mid Sept**

CHC Responsibilities for Current Clinical Year Students

- Proctor or proctor designee for End of Rotation Exams, EORs, for all CORE rotations - last day of each 6 week CORE rotation
 - Provide a room for the students that is free from distractions and has Wi-Fi access
 - Exams are administered through PAEA; instructions and assistance provided by AT Still University
 - Students may not use personal hotspots due to PAEA’s firewalls
 - Elective rotations do not have End of Rotation Exams
- Remediate any EOR exam retakes (if a student fails initial EOR exams)
 - Rescheduled by AT Still University
- Coordinate the Standardized Patient Evaluation (SPE) #1(date scheduled on Clinical Year calendar)
 - Coordinate site for SPE to be completed

- Students are excused from their current rotations and are in one location for this evaluation
- Requires clinician to proctor (MD, PA, NP, DO)- (rubric provided to CHC)
- Requires volunteer to “play” the Standardized patient script is provided to CHC)
- Submit all graded evaluations to AT Still University (coordinate with clinical coordinator)
- Summative Testing Week (dates scheduled on Clinical Year calendar)
 - Coordinate a site for testing
 - Students do not have clinical rotations during this week, and are together in one location for each of these exams
 - Proctor or provide a proctor designee for all exams during Summative Testing Week (End of Curriculum Exam, PACKRAT II)
 - Provide a room for the students that is free from distractions and has wifi access
 - Tests are administered through PAEA; instructions and assistance provided by AT Still University
 - Students may not use personal hotspots due to PAEA’s firewalls
 - Coordinate Mini Grand Rounds – requires clinician facilitator to grade (MD, PA, NP, DO)
 - Coordinate SPE #2
 - Requires clinician to proctor (MD, PA, NP, DO)- rubric provided
 - Requires person to “play” the Standardized patient- script is provided
 - Submit all graded evaluations from SPE to AT Still University- coordinate with coordinators
- Returns to Campus Days occur periodically throughout the Clinical Year.
 - These mostly occur virtually, with the student being excused from their rotation that day and attending remotely.

HOWEVER, there may be an occasion where the students need to be together in one room to attend virtually for group activities. In those instances, the CHC is asked to provide a room for the students to be together.

- Coordinate Objective Structured Clinical Examinations, OSCEs, for visiting AT Still University faculty
 - Faculty will work with RDME to determine a suitable time for faculty to come for the visit
 - ATSU Faculty visits twice per year to perform OSCEs
 - All students are excused from their current rotation, and scheduled to be in one location at the same time (FM or IM)
 - The faculty member goes into a live patient visit with each student and observes them with a clinic patient encounter from interview through to the preceptor presentation and plan.