

# RPAP and MetroPAP News



## In This Issue

- Farewell to Dr. Ruth Westra
- Orientation 17-18 class
- Preceptor Achievement Awards:
  - Americo Fraboni
  - Erin Knudtson
- Student Achievement Award:
  - Kelly McKinnon
- Staples 25 Year Reunion
- Current Students Spotlight:
  - Rachel Busko
  - Stephanie Pickthorn
  - Andre Scarlato
- RPAP 50 Year Reunion Planning

## Greetings from Director, Kirby Clark

As I travel around the state visiting RPAP and MetroPAP students and preceptors, I am inspired by the excellent patient care and medical education happening around our program. I am thankful for an eager and talented group of students who were willing to make the headlong leap into these communities. I am thankful for the preceptors who dedicate their time and talent to the education of those students. I am thankful for an engaged faculty and administrative team here at RPAP headquarters.



Our current students are settling in to their new role on the care team in their communities. Now, with a few months of experience, they are feeling more and more capable. Preceptors, in turn, are providing more and more opportunities for the students to take on responsibility.

It is clear that individuals and communities all over our state are reaping great benefits from the program. We have just finished interviewing student candidates for academic year 2018-2019 and it is also clear that the next class of medical students is ready to step up to their opportunity to contribute.

In all of our medical practices we hear the charge to make “continuous improvement”, and the RPAP-MetroPAP team lives the same philosophy. We have implemented easier to navigate electronic calendars to help our students stay aware of coursework and assignments. We have worked to refine a list of core experiences to assist students and preceptors as they design their 9-month learning plan. We are also developing practical modern systems to collect and organize information from our training sites and preceptors, in order to best match students to the needs of each unique medical community. Exciting just this fall, for the first time, we collected and collated all of our student applications electronically!

We have completed student interviews during the course of December and January on both the Duluth and Twin Cities campuses. In early February we will be matching students to training sites for academic year 2018-2019.

As we prepare for another year, we also prepare for the retirement of a pioneering RPAP faculty member, Dr. Ruth Westra, in January 2018. Her career contributions to RPAP are fantastic. She will leave big shoes to fill both for RPAP and the Duluth medical school.

In October, we welcomed Dr. Anne Keenan, Family Medicine faculty with the St. John's Family Medicine Program, who has joined the faculty and is currently improving our students' on-line learning modules and interfaces.

I am pleased to walk alongside you all in our mission to imagine the future of healthcare, and prepare exceptional physicians to serve rural and urban communities.

Sincerely,  
Kirby Clark

## Farewell from Dr. Ruth Westra

Dear Colleagues,

I will be retiring on January 12, 2018. I want to thank all of the medical students for their energy, enthusiasm for learning and service to the community. I truly love being an RPAP faculty. It is such a delight to participate in all of the RPAP activities. Through the circle of teaching activities from the Fall RPAP Orientation, Communication Skills 1 (CS1), Specialty Visits, Communication Skills 2 (CS2) to the RPAP wrap-up, it has been wonderful to see the growth in clinical skills and knowledge in the students. We are so fortunate to have outstanding RPAP preceptors and an opportunity for all of the students to engage in their assigned communities. Thank you for the privilege of being part of your medical education and journey to become a physician.

This winter I plan to spend time with my family including my 3 grandsons. Plan for lots of physical activity including XC and down hill skiing. We will prepare for a cross country bike trip on the northern tier from Washington State to Maine in the spring.

Dr. Ruth Westra



Dr. Ruth Westra with the whole Duluth Medical School class  
December 5, 2017.

## Thank you, Dr. Ruth Westra



Dr. Ruth Westra: at the RPAP MetroPAP Staff Retreat in Rush City, MN August 2017.

Dr. Ruth Westra is embracing a new journey, exploring retirement, beginning January 12, 2018.

Dr. Westra has been a prominent presence at the University of MN Medical School since ~2001 where she personified Duluth's rural and Native American missions, and served as faculty in the Rural Physician Associate Program (RPAP). A rural person, her academic work reflected a clinical career in rural full scope family medicine and subsequent Veteran's Affairs system work. At the University, in typical rural "can do" style, she readily accepted new challenges and responsibilities in teaching and leadership. She has served as Head of Family Medicine and is currently Head of the combined Family Medicine and Bio-Behavioral Health Department. She also served as Interim Dean of Student Affairs. Her external services include board work with St. Lukes Hospital, service with the Duluth Family Practice Residency, and co-hosting Doctors on Call.

In our lives, we are privileged to meet and work with truly great people. Dr. Ruth Westra is such a person. She lives the "Golden Rule". A mentor's mentor, her heartfelt common-sense guidance and leadership has left lasting impacts on more than a decade and a half of Duluth and

Twin City students, staff and faculty. From students, she is

"approachable, with gentle guidance smiles when happy and a supporting smile when you know she is disappointed".

During her University tenure, she has practiced one day a week at Gateway Family Health Clinic, Ltd. in Moose Lake, MN. From her patients, staff, and colleagues she has earned respect and was sought out for her clinical capabilities, dedication, positive demeanor, and hard work.

Like many others Dr. Ruth Westra will leave a special, positive, and solid imprint on RPAP, and its richest legacy: our new physicians.

Ruth, drop RPAP an email or text as you bike this great rural country, your insights are always welcome! We may well share them in the newsletter....

We will miss you, yet smile and are thrilled you will be enjoying that next stage of life: working at retiring.

Sincerely,

Ray and the RPAP and MetroPAP Staff and Faculty

## Orientation for the RPAP and MetroPAP class of 2017-18



On October 2-4, the Class of 2017-18 participated in Orientation activities to prepare them for spending 9 months in rural and underserved communities. They were immersed in skills stations to train them on patient interactions, surgery basics, emergency room tactics, obstetrics, and research skills. Along with our RPAP/MetroPAP Faculty, many external professionals from different departments across the University of Minnesota, including several RPAP alumni and preceptors, taught during these three days. Students also participated in BioMedical Library resource training to prepare them for their Evidence-Based Medicine project, SNAPPS, and case presentations. Orientation concluded with an Awards Luncheon to honor the Student and Preceptor Achievement Award winners from the Class of 16-17.

### Dr. Americo Fraboni – Preceptor Achievement Award

Part of the nomination letter:

“Dr. Fraboni is an excellent role model of the kind of physician I hope to be. He embodies the life and work of a rural physician through his community involvement as well as his dedication to his patients and practice in Princeton for nearly 20 years. Dr. Fraboni raised his own family in Princeton, so was very involved with the community as they were growing up, and knows many of his patients and their families from interacting with them at school and community events over the years. What I admire most about Dr. Fraboni is his great rapport with his patients; it was clear to me after working with him for just a short time that he truly cares about his patients' life stories and circumstances and not just their latest health problem.”

“Dr. Fraboni is also a fountain of knowledge when it comes to primary care practice - because he gives boards review lectures on various topics around the country, he seems to always be up to date on new practice guidelines. Even if something comes up that he does not know, he is eager to look it up together to learn; he is a great model of the lifelong learning that all physicians and future physicians should strive for. I admire Dr. Fraboni for his dedication to his community, the practice of full-spectrum family medicine, and to teaching the next generation of family medicine physicians through serving as an RPAP preceptor for many years.”



Americo Fraboni and spouse Alex



Kirby Clark and Americo Fraboni



Erin Knudtson and spouse Josh

### Dr. Erin Knudtson – Preceptor Achievement Award

Part of the nomination letter:

“Dr. Knudtson is an important member in her community. She had more patients than the majority of the physicians at Hutchinson Health and new patients always want to see her. She is very involved in the education system in Hutchinson and collaborates with other specialists in the area to improve the quality of life for families and their children. Dr. Knudtson also helped me implement a reading program in the clinic. Most importantly, Dr. Knudtson was always willing to put her patients first. I will never forget the morning she ran from clinic to the unit to perform a lumbar puncture on a baby when no one else could. I will never forget the night she came in to the ED from home to run the code for the baby who came in with cardiopulmonary arrest. I will never forget the kindness and empathy she showed her patients. She is the physician I aspire to be.”



Kirby Clark, Erin Knudtson, and Ray Christensen

## Kelly McKinnon – Student Achievement Award

Part of the nomination letter:

“I have been precepting for 14 years and Kelly is easily in the top 10% of any student I have worked with. He has a calm and easy demeanor, especially with the most complex patients who would typically be overwhelming to most students. Over and over he showed commitment to medicine, our community, as well as his patients. He was the first ever RPAP student nominated by nursing staff in the emergency department for employee of the month for helping them clean up an incontinent patient. Kelly consistently demonstrated compassion for the most sick and vulnerable people of our community.”



Kelly McKinnon and spouse Robyn



Kirby Clark, Kelly McKinnon, and Bob Englander



Kelly McKinnon and spouse Robyn



The McKinnon ATV



The Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital in the fall

### How did you feel winning the Student Achievement Award and what does it mean to you?

I was flattered and shocked when told that I had won the Student Achievement award. I know some of the amazing things that my classmates did at their RPAP sites and I am sure that most of them are much more deserving of this award than I am. I have to thank my preceptor, Dr. Tim Pehl, for such a nice nomination letter. While all the attendings in Grand Rapids were wonderful, he truly fostered my growth as a physician in training and supported my community involvement.

### How did doing RPAP impact your life?

It was such a positive experience! The time living and learning in Grand Rapids just flew by and before I knew it I was an MS4. Now that I am back into mainstream rotations it is apparent to me how much I advanced as a clinician during those 9 months. I am so grateful to have been able to participate in this program. It has made me a stronger and happier future doctor.

### What are your current/future plans?

Life is pretty fantastic for me right now! I just got married to the love of my life, Robyn! We are expecting our first little one in the Spring! I am finishing up my last few rotations before getting to enjoy some major time off. I am looking forward to being a stay at home daddy for at least a couple of months before starting my residency in June.

### What are you hoping to match into?

I am thrilled to be joining the ranks of family medicine!

### Where are you hoping to eventually practice?

Time will tell, but I sure liked being in Grand Rapids.

### Do you have a memorable experience from your time in Grand Rapids that you would like to share?

It was the perfect balance of great experiences! I helped delivery babies and take part in the most gracious and dignified end of life care. I felt embraced by the kindest patients and connected to the most stubborn (those are my favorites anyways). I worked hard in the clinic, ER, and OR and I played even harder hunting, fishing, and riding my ATV. I got to help out at the local free clinic (Project Care) and the Grand Itasca Foundation reached out to help me with generous scholarships. Everywhere I turned the doctors and staff at the Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital were there for me at work and in the community.

## Staples Reunion – 25 years of RPAP



Chad, Julie Benson, Sonja Swenson, David Freeman, Shawn Olson, Courtney Klinkhammer, Berit Amundson, Katie Norris, and Christine Albrecht



Kirby Clark, Christine Albrecht, David Freeman, and Julie Benson at the pig races



Kirby Clark, David Freeman, Courtney Klinkhammer, Julie Benson, Christine Albrecht, and Craig Wolhowe

In August, I had the privilege of joining a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of RPAP in Staples, Minnesota. The Lakewood Health System in Staples has a long tradition of welcoming and mentoring RPAP students. In turn, Staples RPAP students have a tradition of returning to Lakewood Health System to practice!

Our Saturday celebration was spent first at a reception in the beautiful hospital facilities, where a fresh renovation of the emergency department was nearly finished. A fun poster with photos of each of their RPAP students over the years was displayed on the wall, with a fair number of them now on the Lakewood medical staff. The group then moved to long-time RPAP preceptor (and first Staples RPAP student!) Julie Benson’s home, where the kids were thrilled to chase peacocks while the adults enjoyed conversation in the summer sun.

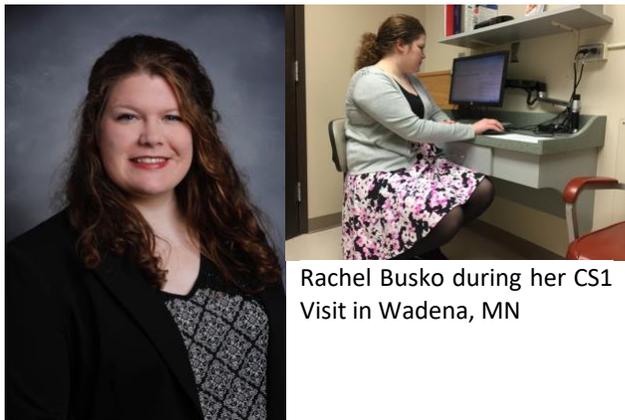
The Lakewood medical group has a palpable spirit of community and teamwork. From administration to staff to physicians, the whole place embraces RPAP. I felt immediately welcomed by the group, and could see why so many students have returned over the years. It was invigorating to be around an organization where it was clearly comfortable for folks to chat with the CEO (Tim Rice), while kicking pebbles on a driveway and sipping lemonade.

I had originally planned to be heading home by early evening, but RPAP preceptors Dr. David Freeman, Dr. Christine Albrecht, and Dr. Julie Benson and a number of RPAP alumni informed me that my visit was not complete until I attended the pig races in Leader, MN. So down the road to Leader we went. The pig races, and human races of all sorts, were a ball. As if all that was not enough, there were still late-night ice cream cones to enjoy across the street!

Fast friends are made in Staples. I highly recommend the experience (both the RPAP one and the pig one)!

Kirby Clark

## Rachel Busko (Wadena 17-18) to sing at Carnegie Hall in April



Rachel Busko during her CS1 Visit in Wadena, MN

Rachel Busko

### What is the event you will be singing at? Why did you decide to audition?

I will be singing at the DCINY event for Eric Whitacre at Isaac Stern Auditorium (which is part of Carnegie Hall). I first heard about the opportunity from Eric Whitacre's website. The concert will be held April 8th, 2018. It is a concert, mainly of his compositions, by a choir of singers from around the world including the United States, Australia, Dubai, and many other places. I have been a fan of Eric Whitacre and his music for years and try to follow what he is composing and where he is performing. On his website last January or February was a call for singers to audition. On a whim, I sent in a recording of his piece "Goodnight Moon". I was contacted in March and told that I had been chosen for the choir and would be performing in New York in April 2018.

### What kind of music do you perform?

At this concert, we will be performing mainly Eric Whitacre original compositions although there will be some gospel selections by Moses Hogan.

### What is your musical/singing background? When did you start and who has inspired and encouraged you along the way?

I have been singing for as long as I can remember. My first real solo performance was in 2nd grade in front of a crowd of approximately 700 people. I have never really suffered from stage fright, so a moment's notice about a performance doesn't really faze me. Since that time, I have loved performing. In high school, I struggled to find a way to blend my voice into a choir. Fortunately, two incredible teachers gave me the opportunity to sing solos and encouraged me to use my voice, not stifle it. This led to many performances, competitions and state choirs. In college, I chose to double-major in biology and music. My specific concentration was vocal performance, which consisted of music analysis, composition and of course performance. Vocal majors are expected to sing in at least 4-5 languages, but I must have performed in at least 12 over that time including English, French, German, Chinese, Russian, Greek, Spanish, and Latin. Soprano is my go-to voice part, but I love the rich tone and harmony that comes with singing alto. My voice tone and range would be considered in the dramatic coloratura range most likely, which of course makes most people think of the stereotypical lady with a Viking helmet singing dramatically (sometimes not so far off, depending on what I am singing). I also played piano, French horn and violin during college.

My family and friends have been extremely supportive in my musical endeavors; in fact, two of my good pianist friends from college have collaborated with me in recitals. My family has always encouraged my desire to sing and put up with some prima donna behavior when I am nearing showtime. ;)

### What kind of role has music/singing played in your life? Has it changed or will it change over the years?

Music has always been present in my life. Both my parents are good singers and always encouraged my brother and I to explore music in one way or another. My mother and I enjoy singing in harmony together whenever we can. Music is my creative outlet and sometimes my only way of communicating how I really feel. The amount of time and energy I am able to spend with music will change over time, but I always want it to be present in one way or another. I may not be able to compose, rehearse and perform as I did before, but I see medicine as another art form that I am practicing, rehearsing and performing daily.

Before graduating medical school, I hope to apply for the Fisch Art of Medicine award so that I might be able to perform a recital during my fourth year.

### Have you used music or singing as part of being a doctor?

In medical school, I have not. In fact, most of my classmates and professors probably do not even know that I am a singer. However, I was able to use my singing at several points during my life before medical school. There were a few instances in which I sat with patients who were restless as they neared the end of their lives and sang lullabies to them as a way to bring them calm. This was a very touching experience that I will never forget.

### In your experience in Wadena have you taken part of any community activities? Any having to do with music/singing?

There are plans for my pianist friend and I to perform later in the year as the physicians and other staff at Tri-County are very curious to hear my singing voice.

## Current MetroPAP Student Spotlight: Andre Scarlato (Central Avenue):



Andre Scarlato



Andre Scarlato, Preceptor Dr. Price-Isuk during the CS1 Visit to Central Clinic

### Navigating the Complexities of Patient Care: The Power of Continuity and Partnership

I have so enjoyed my experience in MetroPAP over these past three months. I continue to be amazed and humbled by the patients I have met, the stories they share with me, and the sacredness of being privy to the intimate details of my patients' lives. Working within an urban federally qualified health center, I have become more aware of the ways in which social and structural determinants of health manifest in the lives of my patients and am learning how to engage on these levels of complexity, recognizing my own position of power and its impact on coming alongside my patients.

While there is still much to learn in the coming months, I have already begun to see the power of continuity within the field of family medicine. With the majority of our first two years of medical school focused on disease processes, I am just now starting to explore the role that deep human relationships can play in the ability to understand the patient's life beyond the clinic walls. While learning the science behind the medicine and patient care is important, I have often been overwhelmed these past three months by the power in which developing trust and meaningful relationships has in improving the health of the patients whom I am serving. Their stories have moved me in a way that help me ask better questions, understand the impact of their illness, and think more deeply about how to address issues such as poverty, systemic racism, and documentation status.

The more time I have to learn and explore within MetroPAP and understand my patients' and community's narratives, the more I have been able to witness how partnership can be used as a vehicle for empowerment and justice for those at the margins. I look forward to the coming months and feel grateful to be supported in a program that values continuity and partnership with our patients to engage in the complexities of health within and outside of the clinic walls.

## Current RPAP Student Spotlight: Stephanie Pickthorn (Luverne):



Stephanie Pickthorn



Stephanie Pickthorn during her CS1 Visit in Luverne, MN

Hello! My name is Stephanie Pickthorn, and I am currently in my 3rd year at the University of Minnesota Medical School. Starting this past October, I started my 9-month RPAP experience in Luverne, MN. I am now 3 months in, and I can say participating in RPAP has been the best decision I have made in my (very new) medical career! First, I am incredibly grateful for the people that I get to work with each day. My preceptors, the nurses I work with, and the rest of the clinic staff have opened up their world to me, and made me feel so welcome at each step. They are invested in me as a learner, a future colleague, and a community member. I love that I am an integrated part of a clinic, recognized and known by those around me. This extends beyond the exam room as well. From volunteering for the Halloween Trunk or Treat event to helping plan and decorate for the staff Christmas party, I feel like a true part of the community here.

Beyond the staff I am honored to learn from, I have learned even more from my patients. The people in Luverne are incredibly open to letting me be a part of their care. I have loved seeing their journey throughout the healthcare system (in the ED, the clinic, the hospital, the OR, the nursing home, and in between), and am so grateful to be an integral part of their experience. Having grown up in a near-by rural town (Marshall!), I feel right at home with the patients at our clinic. It has been wonderful to see how their lives and their health are entwined. Through all of the business that is a rural clinic, the conversations, the tidbits of wisdom, and the numerous stories have meant the most. It is a privilege to care for them and learn from them, and I can't wait to see what the next 6 months brings.

## RPAP 50 Year Reunion planning

In just a few years we will be celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the RPAP Program. We have started the planning process. We want to include all our supporters on the festivities so stay tuned for more celebration information.

\*Alumni please update you email address at [z.umn.edu/RPAPsurvey](http://z.umn.edu/RPAPsurvey) or via the link on our homepage [rpap.umn.edu](http://rpap.umn.edu).



*This fall RPAP Faculty and staff met with a delegation from the Universidad Nacional Mayor in San Marcos, Peru to discuss longitudinal learning in rural settings.*

### RPAP Faculty

**Kirby Clark, MD, Director**

**Winter Activities:** - I hope to enjoy cross country skiing and sledding with my kids.

**Ray Christensen, MD, Associate Director**

**Winter Activities:** - Spending time with my grandchildren, daily walks and enjoying the changing seasons in the night sky and Lake Superior, shoveling snow, visiting students at their rural sites.

**Nancy J. Baker, MD, Faculty**

**Winter Activities:** - I hope to cross country ski and snowshoe while visiting our cabin on the Gunflint Trail. I also hope to take a creative writing class at the Loft Literary Center.

**Darin Brink, MD, Faculty**

**Winter Activities:** - I enjoy winter biking.

**Anne Keenan, MD, Faculty**

**Winter Activities:** - Walking our new puppy, running on the quiet snowy river road path, trying out Great British Baking Show recipes.

**Javad Keyhani, MD, Faculty**

**Winter Activities:** - My family and I plan to go visit our in-laws in Colorado and downhill ski for a few days. We also cross country ski on a little lake by our house once the water is frozen.

### RPAP Staff

**Pat Schommer, MA, Administrative Director**

**Winter Activities:** -Spotting eagle nests while the leaves are off, so I can watch them next spring.

**Patty Bailey, Executive Assistant and Office Coordinator**

**Winter Activities:** - The arrival of my 2<sup>nd</sup> child (baby girl), enjoying being indoors snuggled up as I will be on maternity leave, watching my 19 month old son grow and be so excited about everything.

**Brinsley Davis, Program Specialist**

**Winter Activities:** - Putting on snow pants and sledding with my kids, building snowmen in the backyard, and staying indoors and reading.

**Kate Krasaway, Program Associate**

**Winter Activities:** - In the cooler months I enjoy traveling, hiking/walks with my puppy, ice skating, and attending/watching football games.

### \*FUN FACT

Of our current 36 RPAP Primary Preceptors 61% are RPAP alumni!

And 20% of our MetroPAP Primary Preceptors are RPAP alumni also.

Faculty Presentations  
/Awards/Publications

**Ray Chistensen, MD, Alan Johns, MD, and Ruth Westra, MD,** moderate the 18 weekly Doctors On Call series for WDSE-WRPT-PBS on Thursdays from 7-7:30 PM. This live series includes the moderator and 3 local physicians taking questions answered by 3 volunteer medical students each week.

**Kirby Clark, MD,** “Minnesota’s Top Doctor of 2017-2018 for Family Medicine”, Minnesota Monthly, October 2017.

**Kirby Clark, MD,** presented RPAP to the first and second year medical students on the Duluth campus in October 2017

Faculty Presentations  
/Awards/Publications

**Javad Keyhani, MD,** “Faces of Family Medicine” panel discussion with Dr. James Pacala, New Department Head of Family Medicine, Dr. Karen Borchert, of UMMC/Smiley’s, and Dr. Lisa Phifer, of United Family Medicine Residency.

**Ruth Westra, MD and Paula Termuhlen, MD,** “Precision Medicine in Rural Minnesota: What does it look like?”, Minnesota Physician. Volume XXI, No. 8. 26-27, 40.

Alumni

Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) Innovation Grants awarded to:  
-**Ben Rosenstein** (MetroPAP 15-16)  
-**Angela Smithson** (Hastings 92-23)  
-**Jesse Susa** (Moose Lake 14-15)

**Jon Hallberg, MD,** (Red Wing 90-91) MD, “Minnesota’s Top Doctor of 2017-2018 for Family Medicine”, Minnesota Monthly, October 2017.

**Rachel Lee** (Princeton 16-17), was selected as one of the 2018 Student Scholars for the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM).



Keep in touch and stay up-to-date

Like our FaceBook page!

<http://www.facebook.com/rpapumn/>

Request for RPAP/MetroPAP  
News and Pictures

Any updates to your home, family, residency, or practice status? Any publications that reference your RPAP experience? Any fun photos? Please let us know!

[rpapumn@umn.edu](mailto:rpapumn@umn.edu)



420 Delaware St. SE, MMC 81  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
612-624-3111  
Fax: 612-624-2613

Email: [rpapumn@umn.edu](mailto:rpapumn@umn.edu)  
Web: [www.rpap.umn.edu](http://www.rpap.umn.edu)

The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.