With a first-time pass rate of 94%, the Class of 2011 is the fifth Touro University California Joint Program class in a row to beat the national average for first-time PANCE pass rates, which was 91% in 2011. In addition, the overall pass rate for the Program is 99%.

The PANCE is the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination. Successful completion of the PANCE is a requirement to practice clinically as a PA in the United States, although individual states may apply further criteria before granting a license. After passing the PANCE, PAs become NCCPA-certified, which entitles them to use the PA-C designation. To maintain NCCPA certification and retain the right to use the PA-C designation, PAs in many states must log 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years and sit for recertification every six years.

Class of 2011 PANCE: 94%
After graduation, I worked in the ED at Doctors Medical Center in San Pablo, California. I soon realized that I wanted to have more of a relationship with my patients. I love discussing with patients how they can help themselves return to health equilibrium, nurturing the mind and body through physical activity, whole foods and the ever important human connection. This is difficult to do in the ED.

About a year after graduation, I moved to Pocatello, Idaho, in the middle of endless, beautiful mountains. I am in the NHSC Loan Repayment Program, working at a full-scope primary care practice providing preventive, acute and chronic services across the lifespan. On a daily basis, I work with my two supervising doctors and three other PAs. Additionally, I regularly consult with a variety of specialists regarding complex cases. Since this is a NHSC site, we accept all patients regardless of insurance status, whether Medicaid or uninsured. I use my MPH more unconsciously at this point in my career, yet I know the added qualifications helped me to secure the job I wanted.

A typical working day is like a box of chocolates - you never really know what you’ll get. From a laceration repair to pap smears to mole excisions, the fun is endless. I have my own patients that I get to know and work with over considerable amounts of time. I commonly work with Idaho’s indigenous population, university students, farmers, and multiple generations of families.

My long-term professional goal is to provide effective natural and alternative treatment options to underserved populations through a holistic approach. I don’t want to just tell my patients what to do to prevent chronic disease. I want to show them with individual and group lessons focused on healthy cooking, exercise, relaxation and relationships.

Practicing full-scope primary care requires constant expansion of my comfort zone, which is challenging yet attractive at the same time. This is at times arduous and can be anxiety-provoking while an outcome is pending. Anything important is worth worrying about. And my patients are worth worrying about.

ALUMNI PROFILE:

NHSC Loan Recipient Desiree Westfall, ’10

On December 16, 2011, the Class of 2013 celebrated the near-end of their didactic training and beginning of their clinical year with the traditional white coat ceremony. Over 300 guests packed the Lander Hall Auditorium. The keynote speaker was Robert Wooten, PA-C, President, AAPA, who also led the students through the PA Oath.

Four students were honored by their classmates for their service to the community: Paterson Rene, Matt McCartt, Zachary Hathway, and Autumn Fingerson. Matt McCartt was additionally recognized for his work at the Touro Student-Run Health Clinic, which was instrumental in setting it up and keeping it alive.

A reception followed at the Farragut Inn. The ‘13s are starting their clinical year in mid-February 2012.
Emem Ekpenyong ’07 Featured in *PA Professional*

Class of 2007 alum Emem Ekpenyong (featured in this newsletter in Fall 2009) has been profiled in the cover story of the January 2012 edition of the AAPA’s *PA Professional* magazine.

The article focused on the NHSC programs that help make PA education affordable. These programs are the Loan Repayment Program (LRP) and the Scholarship Program.

Until this fall, Touro University California students were ineligible for the NHSC Scholarship Program due to the joint nature of the program. A number of our graduates are in the Loan Repayment Program. As the NHSC cannot release their names, we are often unaware of this—so if you are, were, or know someone who is or was in the LRP, please let us know!

APHA’s National Public Health Week, April 2-8, 2012

With nearly 1 million Americans dying every year from diseases that could be prevented, even small preventative changes and community initiatives can make a big difference in living healthier lives. National Public Health Week 2012 (NPHW) will build upon the National Prevention Strategies to create a healthier nation by promoting healthy behaviors in the following areas:

- Active Living and Healthy Eating
- Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs
- Communicable Diseases
- Reproductive and Sexual Health
- Mental and Emotional Well-Being

Since 1995, communities across the country have celebrated National Public Health Week (NPHW) during the first full week of April to highlight issues that are important to improving the public’s health.

The American Public Health Association (APHA) creates comprehensive planning, organizing and outreach materials that can be used during and after NPHW to raise awareness. Go to their website to download materials, or to sign up for updates.

http://www.nphw2012.org

**PRECEPTOR PROFILE:** CHLA Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Clinic

Although Touro University California’s PA Program focuses on primary care, some of our graduates choose to work in specialty fields. A particularly well-loved elective rotation is with Jed Sejismundo, PA-C, at the CHLA Heme-Onc clinic.

The PA Group at the Hematology-Oncology Clinic of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) has precepted many Touro students over the years. The Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Clinical Preceptorship Program was developed by Jed Sejismundo, PA-C. An early participant was Carla Tapia, Class of 2008, who worked at the clinic until recently.

Mr. Sejismundo: “It’s always a pleasure to precept Touro students. The students you send us are, in my opinion, a caliber above the typical PA student—so much so that we’ve extended jobs offers to some of them (most notably your alum Carla Tapia, who was a complete joy to work with).”

The PA group is responsible for three major areas of Center medical care: (1) they work closely with nursing staff to manage the “fast track” area where hematolony oncology patients with acute illnesses or treatment complications can be evaluated and treated, and admitted to the inpatient area if necessary; (2) they perform procedures, such as lumbar punctures and bone marrow aspirates/biopsies, required for diagnosis and treatment of diseases such as acute leukemia. Most of these procedures are performed under anesthesia in the Ambulatory Surgical Center; and (3) the PAs work side by side with attending physicians examining patients and implementing their plan of care in provider clinics and the Day Hospital.

Children’s Hospital Los Angeles is a nonprofit medical center that serves over 93,000 children per year, and provides more than $125 million annually in community benefits to the children and families of Los Angeles.
JOINT MSPAS / MPH MISSION
Through the integration of the Physician Assistant and Public Health disciplines, the mission of the Joint MSPAS/MPH Program is to: 1) train quality PAs to work with underserved populations, 2) recruit applicants from these communities or individuals with a demonstrated interest in serving these communities, and 3) increase access to care for underserved populations.

Meet the Faculty: Sarah Sullivan, RN, MSN, PNP, MPH

Sarah Sullivan has an MPH from the University of California, Berkeley and a MS in Nursing from the University of California, San Francisco. She also has a Registered Nurse license and a Nurse Practitioner license in the state of California.

Ms. Sullivan has over 20 years experience in international and cross cultural nursing. She has worked in many countries, including Mozambique, Angola, Bolivia, East Timor, Bangladesh, and the USA.

Ms. Sullivan has worked with volunteer organizations, community clinics, government and private hospitals, NGOs, UN agencies, USAID, and universities. Her recent international public health work includes contracts with the World Health Organization in the area of Nursing and Midwifery and consultant work with USAID assessing and designing health systems.

As Assistant Professor with the Public Health Program at Touro University California, she coordinated the Pediatrics course for the Class of 2013.

Where are our Grads?
The Touro University California PA Program was first accredited by ARC-PA on September 2, 2002. Ten years later, we have graduated 221 students, and this fall will see our tenth entering class! Where are our grads now?

- Of the 221 grads, we have information for all but eight.
- The most common specialties:
  - 53 are in Primary Care/Family Practice
  - 26 are in Orthopedics
  - 18 are in Internal Medicine
  - 16 are in Emergency Medicine
- Where they practice:
  - 166 are in California
  - Many stayed in the West: six in Nevada and in Arizona, four in Oregon and in Washington
- Who their patients are:
  - 89 work in areas with low numbers of primary care providers (PC-HPSAs)
  - 48 work in a Federally Qualified Health Center (a primary-care clinic that provides a sliding scale) or a National Health Service Corps repayment site

Upcoming Conferences

Association of Family Practice Physician Assistants, March 21-24, Disney World, FL
AAPA “Capitol Connection,” March 25-27, Alexandria, VA
California Public Health Association-North, May 2, 2012, San Francisco and Sacramento, CA
American Academy of Physician Assistants, May 26-31, Toronto, ON