



Jennifer Forbes announced as one of the 2018 Mental Health Outreach Fellows

In March, Jennifer Forbes, MHS, PA-C, Assistant Professor in the Division of Physician Assistant Studies, received the Mental Health Outreach Fellowship through the PA (Physician Assistant) Foundation. Forbes was one of sixteen physician assistants selected to conduct outreach in their communities across the United States using the validated Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) curriculum.

Mental Health First Aid teaches individuals how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health disorders and substance use disorders in their community. The goal of the MHFA program is to enhance the mental health knowledge and skills of the public. This goal is achieved by educating individuals on how to recognize and respond to signs of mental illness or a mental health crisis. Participants in the course learn the risk factors, warning signs, and strategies used to help those showing signs of mental health or addiction concerns.

The PA Foundation Mental Health Outreach Fellowship is designed to connect the clinical expertise and community engagement of physician assistants to help in areas focused on mental health. As a Mental Health Outreach Fellow, Forbes will serve as a trainer and conduct community outreach and training to various groups in her community.

“I will focus my teaching efforts on the medically underserved, secondary education counselors, and older adults,” Forbes said. “The courses will be offered at different venues to accommodate the needs of the groups.”

“I have also recently applied for a grant and those funds would be used to cover the cost of the course textbook and completion certificate,” Forbes said. “This would allow me to offer the course free of charge and would remove cost as a barrier to participation.”

Beyond offering training and outreach courses using the MHFA curriculum, Forbes will also submit de-identified outcomes of the pre and post-training surveys to assess the changes in the participants’ knowledge and behavior prior to and after the training. Forbes will provide additional insight for ways to refine and expand the MHFA program from a health care provider’s perspective, as well as submit a MHFA poster presentation for the 2019 American Academy of Physician Assistants conference.

For more information regarding the 2018 Mental Health Outreach Fellows, visit <https://pa-foundation.org/mental-health-outreach-fellows/>.

For more information regarding Mental Health First Aid, visit <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>.

Kristen Steiner
Public Relations Associate
801.851.5321