

Emergency Medicine PA fellow program

Although demand for physician assistants (PAs) in emergency medicine has been booming, there are very few formalized training programs nationwide, and even fewer emergency departments willing to hire new graduates without prior experience. In 2003, doctors, administrators and PAs in Johns Hopkins Bayview's emergency department realized that an official training program would be very valuable, and began planning what eventually became the Emergency Medicine Physician Assistant Residency Program.

"During the 18 months of the program, the resident completes nine months in the emergency department, as well as a month each in the medical intensive care unit (MICU) and cardiac intensive care unit (CICU)," explains education director **Mary Masterson, PA-C**.

This training is much more comprehensive than many other hospitals, where PAs are "relegated to 'fast track' work—that is, repairing lacerations and treating non-life-threatening conditions," says emergency department administrative director **Robert Marshall**. "Our program expands their knowledge base and competencies so that their scope is the entire emergency department."

The program's residents have gained respect throughout the department. Despite being only 15 months into the

program, PA resident **Katie Gasper, PA-C**, recalls "being called upon by an attending physician to teach residents how to perform procedures."

Masterson estimates it could take up to five years for a PA to gain the expertise that residents receive through the program. In addition, she adds, the residents are included in the weekly emergency medicine conferences held for the Johns Hopkins University Emergency Medicine Residency, which broadens their knowledge of the department's place in the health system at large.

After proving its value with one resident in 2007, the program has steadily expanded. Nine PAs have completed the program, and another five residents are currently enrolled or committed. According to Marshall, 70 percent of graduates have been retained as full-time employees. Others have gone on to work across the country, as well as in Kenya, Israel and Uganda.

"This program is impossible to compare to any education one could get anywhere else," says Gasper. "It's truly an experience of a lifetime."

Program director **Jonathan Lerner, PA-C**, says other PA programs have been using Johns Hopkins Bayview as a model.

For more information, visit hopkinsbayview.org/emresidency.



Pictured from left to right are participants and organizers of the Emergency Medicine Physician Assistant Residency Program: Giorgio Galetto, M.D., Mary Masterson, PA-C, Katie Gasper, PA-C, and Jonathan Lerner, PA-C.