

Nathaniel Shekem, PA-C, MPAS
Director at Large Platform Statement

I have been the fortunate beneficiary of excellent mentorship and leadership within the University of Iowa Department of Emergency Medicine from a postgraduate trainee position through my current faculty appointment and role as program director for our APP Emergency Medicine Residency. If chosen for a Director at Large position, I will offer unique insights that can benefit all emergency medicine PAs (EMPAs). At a department and hospital level, I work in an environment that exemplifies collegial relationships between all healthcare team members. I have been given innumerable opportunities by my department physician leadership that might not have been available at other institutions. I have used these opportunities to challenge myself to evolve into a proficient and passionate clinician, educator, and mentor. I hope to use my diverse experiences working closely with physicians, APPs and all other allied healthcare team members to forge improved relationships and temper some of the recent concerns and animosity that has been displayed at a national level. My involvement with SEMPA has provided me additional opportunities to connect with other EMPAs with similar interests and passion. I will advocate for continued advances within our profession while also ensuring high standards for all EMPAs.

I am aware and closely following the narrative of the recent position papers put out and distributed widely by our emergency physician colleagues and their national organizations that advocate for limiting EMPA practice in emergency medicine and ending postgraduate education for EMPAs. Some of the divisive language used in these position statements and the comments and opinions that have ensued have been discouraging to say the least. Our ability to form trusted relationships with our patients has been inappropriately undermined. EMPAs have an obligation to demonstrate to our physician colleagues and patients that our training is sound, our clinical skills are proven, and we have broad capabilities to be reliably adapted into all emergency medicine settings with proper supervision and support.

We, the specialty of Emergency Medicine, can and must do better. I know this is possible because the setting I work in has a proven method of success. As a board member, it will be critically important to ensure open lines of communication between all organizations. Of equal importance, we must remain open minded during discussions to appreciate the real concerns of our colleagues and ensure that all viewpoints are being considered in the decisions that made. I would like to continue to gain further insight into the challenges being encountered by my EMPA colleagues, to assess for patterns or recurring themes, and work collaboratively to propose solutions where all involved parties feel heard and valued.

One of my strongest attributes is my experience with teaching and training APPs, most specifically in emergency medicine. I am uniquely aware of the capabilities of well trained and supported EMPAs. I am a strong proponent of ensuring high standards for quality training of EMPAs, both in postgraduate education and for practicing EMPAs. Highlighting these efforts could help to allay potential concerns from physicians and patients. I plan to use the skills I have developed while in a leadership role with our postgraduate training program at the University of

Iowa, my recent experience going through postgraduate accreditation with ARC-PA, and my work with SEMPA for the recent revisions for the EMPA Practice Guidelines and EMPA Postgraduate Training Program Standards to help guide future decisions on how we encourage EMPAs to be incorporated into their unique practice settings. Every EMPA that has committed to the specialty of emergency medicine deserves the necessary support from SEMPA and the healthcare systems where they provide exceptional care. I hope to play a role in advancing this narrative and leading our profession forward.