



# Outside the 9 to 5... Look What Dermatology PAs Are Doing

## Cheryl Jones, MPAS, PA-C

By Heidi Maines, Contributing Writer

Some professionals settle for a career that they do not want. Others work hard and never find happiness. However, for Cheryl Jones, working in dermatology puts a smile on her face – it is her passion.

Aside from her job as a dermatology physician assistant, Jones is the founder of the Michigan Dermatology Physician Assistants (MiDPA). This state chapter is located in Detroit, Michigan, where Jones started it seven years ago. She also served as its president for four years. Today she works as a MiDPA board member with fellow dermatology PA Beth Belesky, but is still thankful for the time she spent as its leader. "You've got all your ducks in a row so it's the same thing every year," Jones said. "The nice thing about it is I know just about every PA around."

Prior to the inception of the MiDPA, Jones spoke with pharmaceutical representative Richard Scarlett at several Michigan dermatology meetings. She told him that local dermatology PAs needed a SDPA state chapter of their own. Getting the state chapter off the ground was easier than Jones thought it would be, and with Scarlett's help, they hit the ground running. "Everyone was so positive about it," Jones said.

Yearly conferences are held by the MiDPA and Jones said that a positive attitude is always present. Dermatology PAs come from all over the state to attend and have a chance to network with each other. They also have the opportunity to discuss challenging cases and other dermatology related issues, which they may encounter from day-to-day on the job. "The nice thing about going to these meetings is you get to sit down with people who are doing the exact same thing that you are, and that always makes for a fascinating conversation," Jones said.



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Her hope for the future of the MiDPA is continued expansion. Jones said that dermatology PAs from other parts of Michigan have stepped up to create their own sub-groups by region, because it is difficult for many PAs to travel across the state for meetings and conferences. Jones also said that MiDPA members are active in promoting their profession. The members try their best to inform more dermatologists about the importance of having a PA, highlighting the positive impacts that a dermatology PA can have on their practices. "It's like [having] a permanent resident in a way," Jones said. "I love the partnership we have with the dermatologists. They treat us as a valuable part of their practice."

Born and raised near Detroit, Jones graduated from the University of Detroit Mercy in 1995 and began her career as a dermatology PA in 1996. Jones said her first experience with the specialized field of dermatology came when a friend and colleague needed a work shift covered in a dermatology office. At the time, Jones was working in family medicine/urgent care and had little knowledge about dermatology, but did it anyway. "It just took off from there," she said. "I loved it."

Jones said that her dermatology career has given her the opportunity to do cosmetic as well as medical dermatology. She said that helping people look good and feel good at the same time is a rewarding combination. "I know it sounds so cliché but when people are happy with what you do for them, it warms your heart," she said. Jones looks forward to her continued involvement in shaping the dermatology PA profession through her involvement with the MiDPA. 📍

*Do you know a dermatology PA we could highlight for a future "Outside the 9 to 5..." article? Please contact us at: Editor@jdpa.com*