

Mark DeSantis, PA-C 1997 - 1999

Mark DeSantis served as the society's 10th President. Mark led by example and was known for being an articulate speaker and keen negotiator. Having the patience of a saint enabled Mark to successfully work through the governmental issues the society faced.

From your Perspective, what were the greatest challenges that the PSPA and its leadership faced during your term in office as president?

One of the biggest challenges was trying to get our allopathic regulations rewritten to remove barriers to practice. During the same time, the nurse practitioners were trying to get prescriptive privileges and remove themselves from under the Medical Board. This caused quite a bit of tension amongst physicians, nurse practitioners, the State Medical Board, and the Board of Nursing. Everyone waited to see who would blink first. After no movement for several months, the Nursing Board introduced HB 50 into the legislature. Up until now, most changes sought went through the regulatory process. But that process required all parties to work together and agree on the final document. There was not going to be an agreement on this issue because the Medical Board felt that if the NPs were going to prescribe, then they needed to have Medical Board oversight. Nursing strongly disagreed. HB 50 quickly gained support in the legislature through a strong nursing lobby and public hearings were scheduled.

Up to this point, the PSPA stayed out of the argument, because we had changes in our own regulations that we wanted and didn't need nursing angry with us and lobbying against us. That was until the sponsor of the bill and former nurse, Patricia Vance called physician assistants, "high school educated people out there writing prescriptions." It was at that point that we decided to publicly testify, not to go against NP prescribing, but to set the record straight and educate the committee about the PA profession.

In the end, HB 50 failed as it lost support of the legislature and the nursing board and medical board came to an agreement. The NPs would only fall under the medical board if they were prescribing medications. Unfortunately, that whole problem took nearly 2 years to settle, setting our agenda back at least 2 -4 years.

What were your greatest achievements for PSPA during your term?

Building relationships between organized medicine and the PSPA. Our relationship with the Medical Society and the Board of Medicine became stronger during those years. It was fundamental to our goals that we strengthen the physician/PA team concept. Additionally, I think continuing to build the infrastructure of the Society that was started by presidents before me helped us be better prepared for the new millennium. In order for an organization to function properly and be successful, it needs to have a good internal map guiding it toward the goals set by the board of directors.

What were your greatest disappointments?

Not getting our narcotic prescriptive authority and scope of practice completed.

Tell us something that happened during your term as president that you think our members should know.

I really don't know how to answer this one...the membership was informed of everything that went on.

Now that time has passed, was being president of the PSPA something that you are glad you tackled? Did it help your career?!

I am glad that I served as president. I think that everyone should give something back to their profession in some way. Whether it is holding office in their professional organization, teaching students, or serving their community, there is no better feeling than knowing that you have helped your profession move forward.

Where did you get your PA education and when did you graduate?

I graduated from Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania in 1983

In what specialties have you worked?

Internal Medicine Hospitalist PA

Occupational Medicine

Hematology/Oncology

Family Medicine

Geriatrics

What are you doing now?

I am working in family medicine and geriatrics in Greensburg, PA and remain active in the PSPA as Governmental Affairs Chairman.

What are your major interests in life?

I enjoy reading, traveling, playing the guitar, gardening, and spending time with my family and friends. I also fly radio controlled airplanes through the Laurel Highlands Model Aircraft Club.

Who are your significant others, family members?

My wife Susan and I have two daughters. One is in college and the other high school.