

# Affiliate Spotlight – Pullman Regional Hospital

## A NARAP Affiliate Program



Pullman Regional Hospital's Program participants volunteer in Pullman Regional's Emergency Department earning clinical research hours administering surveys to ED patients and fulfilling other duties assigned by staff. This program is aligned with Washington State University (WSU) and is a great opportunity for students to spend time in a clinical setting, experience direct patient interaction and network with the hospital staff. Upon acceptance in to the program, students give surveys to patients in the Emergency Department to contribute to NARAP research projects, as well as assisting staff within the Emergency Department as a volunteer. Program Chiefs train students how to give the survey when they go through NARAP training and students also attend a general PRH volunteer training. The program requires students to fulfill one four-hour shift per week for ten weeks each term, with some flexibility built in. At the end of each term, a letter of evaluation is sent to the student advisor to provide them information about their involvement. In order to reduce bias, students are not allowed to volunteer at any other part of the hospital during the time you are in this program.

The Pullman Affiliate program has a long history of success in NARAP. In 2014, the program participated in American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout and in addition to having their emergency needs met via student involvement, NARAP and Pullman worked together in a study to this regard. NARAP announced that more than one-third of current tobacco users in a national, multi-center study had value-added to their visit to the emergency department from a referral to their state Quitline's free, tobacco cessation treatment programs. The results are in the October 2014 digital edition of *Addictive Behavior*. Utilizing pre-health professional students as Research Associates (RAs) to enroll 19,149 non-critical patients and their visitors in the research at 10 emergency departments across the U.S., the NARAP and its Affiliate hospitals conducted this newly announced research.

Pullman was one of the participating hospitals with 14 pre-health students from Washington State University currently serving as NARAP Research Associates in the Emergency Department. This prospective interventional study is believed to be the 4th largest ever conducted in the U.S. The RAs volunteered one four-hour shift per week in the emergency department and there was no cost to the participants and little or no cost for the hospitals.

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Joanne Kunze of Pullman noted that the work here was excellent experience for the students. The work demonstrated how RAs can enroll unprecedented numbers of participants in large-scale, national, multi-center research in the emergency department as a cost-effective place for public health screening and prevention. In conjunction with NARAP, Pullman provides incomparable clinical opportunities unique to the emergency department while teaching students the fundamentals for interacting with patients.

The term for students are in-line with the WSU academic calendar. Generally, each term begins after school has started and, if the RA has completed enough shifts, the term ends a week before Finals Week begins. Fall term is roughly September to December. Spring term is roughly January to May. Summer term is roughly mid-May to mid-August. There is some flexibility, especially during the summer.

Prior to taking shifts, accepted students attend a general hospital orientation as well as a NARAP-specific training. The general volunteer orientation is scheduled by Michelle Smith, the PRH Volunteer Coordinator, and usually takes place at the beginning of each term during the late afternoon and evening of a week day. The NARAP training takes place shortly after the general PRH orientation.

There are 16 shifts available each week, so we can have 16 RAs each term, plus up to 4 back-up RAs in case RAs are ill or are otherwise unable to complete their shifts that term. The number of applicants we may accept for each term is dependent on how many RAs return for that term. For example, if 6 RAs return, then 10 applicants can be accepted plus 4 back-ups.

Each Research Associate takes one four-hour shift each week. Once applicants have been admitted to the program, their availability for the shifts will be requested. Research Associates may not get their first choice of shift, and returning RAs have priority. However, we do our best to work with all RAs schedules. Also, once we have established a general shift schedule, then RAs can work with each other and us to switch shifts for exams, illness, etc.

The general shifts are:

- Weekdays (Monday through Friday) 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.
- Weekends (Saturday and Sunday) 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., 3:00 - 7:00 p.m., and 7:00 - 11:00 p.m.

In this program, RAs wear semi-professional clothing such as slacks or khakis, nice closed-toes shoes, and their name badge. Once RAs have their NARAP polo shirt, they will wear that. Before then, they wear blouses, polos or button-ups along with the PRH Volunteer jacket.

There are many benefits associated with participating in the Pullman program. Two basic benefits are gaining recorded volunteer clinical research hours, and a letter of evaluation sent to students' advisor detailing involvement in the program. Other benefits include experiencing the Emergency Department environment; meeting, gaining insight from, and learning from physicians, nurses, and other hospital staff; seeing practical applications of what students may be learning in school; learning about and seeing conditions, diseases,

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treatments, and procedures; and learning how patients are received and sorted (triage) among many other items. In general, RAs benefit from this program in relation to the effort they put into it. The Chief, Assistant Chiefs, and past RAs are available to give ideas to help current RAs make the most of their experience.

### 2017-2018 Pullman Program Staff

- Kristen Wedam | Chief Research Associate
- Cat Bardon | Assistant Chief Research Associate
- Joanne Kunze | Assistant Chief Research Associate
- Zachary Taylor | Assistant Chief Research Associate

To engage with the program, please email: [chiefra.wsu@gmail.com](mailto:chiefra.wsu@gmail.com)

Or write to: Chief Research Assistant, Pullman Regional Hospital, Volunteer Services, 835 SE Bishop Blvd., Pullman, WA 99163.