



**Jim Wojciehowski**, retired Physician Assistant

Married 48 years to the same wonderful, adventuresome partner.

Owned a restaurant in the late 1970's outside Philadelphia, sold at a profit, and entered Nursing school in 1981, one of only two males to have attended the school to date.

My wife and I became traveling nurses in 1984 working in 14 different states and 31 different hospitals over an eight year period.

Came to Alaska as traveling nurses in 1989 working in Soldotna, and returned permanently to Alaska in 1992 working in Dillingham, for Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation.

Entered the Physician Assistant program at the University of North Dakota in 1995. The program was designed to take critical care trained nurses from rural underserved areas, cross train them as Physician Assistants, in the hopes they would return to provide health care to area residents after board certification.

I worked closely with the Kanakanak medical staff to redesign the PA job description to include not only coverage of the walk-in clinic but also two days of scheduled appointments and a 24 hour first call cycle to the Emergency room one day per week.

I was assigned remote village care including, Perryville, Ivanoff Bay, Goodnews Bay, and Manokotak. An amazingly rewarding experience for someone who loves the art of medicine.

I became active with the American Academy of Physician Assistants and later the Alaska Academy of Physician Assistants holding the office of Director at Large, Vice President, President, and Past President.

During that tenure I flew to Washington D.C. and met with the late Senator Ted Stevens and worked closely with him and his director of medical affairs Liz Connell. We were able within a six month period to alter the Indian Health Service loan repayment distribution system giving Physician Assistants their own piece of the pie. This was important in order to attract PA's to rural Alaska Native health locations from the lower 48.

Also during this period myself and two other PA's on the board identified the urgent need to recommend licensing regulation simplification to the Alaska State Medical Board. This took over five years of attendance at every SMB meeting throughout the State, winning the trust and respect of the members. Eventually, what started as a borderline adversarial relationship evolved into a supportive one in which the SMB, with our guidance streamlined the license and collaborative relationship process making it easier for PA's from outside Alaska to get licensed while continuing to ensure their qualifications to do so.

We impressed one member of the SMB that when he, Democratic Senator Donny Olsen, became elected he sponsored a bill that passed that year giving a Physician Assistant a voting seat on the Alaska State Medical Board, an achievement of which I am most proud.

In May 2022 I was elected President of the Basher Community Council and in the last 7 months achieved the following goals. I felt communication between the BCC and residents of Stuckagain Heights needed improvement in the hopes of fostering involvement. The email list when I took office had 80 addresses and bounce backs of at least 15 invalid addresses. My wife, our Secretary, and myself went door to door and updated the email list to the present 254 accurate addresses. I started sending out frequent email updates. Attendance at our in person meetings improved.

Stuckagain is the highest wildfire danger hillside location in the Anchorage Bowl compounded by the fact we have a single egress. I have worked tirelessly to improve that situation. I attended the initial Wildlands Urban Interface meeting organized by Fire Chief Schrage and was able to meet and network with representatives of many agencies.

After personal talks with representatives of the Bureau of Land Management a plan was drawn up, supported by federal funding, to redress the shaded fuel breaks in the 700 acre Campbell Tract down slope from Stuckagain as well as generalized plans for Spruce Bark Beetle Kill mitigation.

I worked with representatives from JBER in an attempt to develop a plan for an emergency only secondary egress for my community but unfortunately that will not happen.

As an alternative I have approached Chief Schrage with the idea of a 100 meter wide fuel break along the full length of Campbell Airstrip Road, our only present egress. This plan is still in the discussion phase.

I feel my diverse travels and past public service achievements outlined above represents the valuable assembly asset I could be for the residents of the Municipality, especially those in District 5 where I have lived for the last 22 years.