Vascular PAs, A Home at Last
A desire for a professional home just for physician assistants working in vascular health – that and "a little bit of Nashville moonshine" – helped get the ball rolling. And now, vascular PAs have a new Section and professional home within SVS. Open enrollment for Charter members occurred throughout December and more than 100 PAs answered the call!

Erin Hanlon, who co-led the effort, had presented an abstract at the 2017 annual conference of the Society for
Vascular Nursing. A home for vascular PAs came up among a group of people at a reception, she noted. "We all agreed there is a big need to fill for vascular PAs."

Listening was SVS Executive Director Kenneth M. Slaw, PhD. He asked her if she would be interested in helping to establish a home for vascular PAs within SVS. She was an enthusiastic "yes."

She and longtime vascular PA Ricardo Morales, who started a society for vascular PAs in Florida, worked together, assessing interest, evaluating the need and brainstorming ideas. They attended the 2017 Vascular Annual Meeting, meeting with surgeons and other PAs. "We wanted to have a society to build our CMEs and build our knowledge," said Hanlon.

Goal No. 1 was to get their new section established … check. The SVS Executive Board approved it Oct. 1. Their goal for 2018 is to build membership and build a program at the 2018 VAM in Boston tailored to the PA members of the vascular team.

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Being part of this team is central to Hanlon’s vision. "The surgeon performs the surgery. But you’re the one answering patients’ questions, assessing daily needs, responding to critical needs and doing the paperwork," she said. "You’re the ‘point-of-care’ person, the one they turn to.

"We can be first assistant in the OR. We can be the right-hand man of the surgeon," she said.

Longer-term plans call for more training and education for vascular PAs as well as expanding CMEs and VAM programming. "Have a PA do a presentation at VAM," she suggested. "Let us participate in the simulation training. Hands-on learning is very important."

Long-term, she "would love the SVS PA section to be recognized as the leading society for vascular surgery PAs," she said. "Expanding our knowledge and expanding where we can be utilized properly within the team practice is the most important mission goal."

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