



Advanced Practice Educational eXperience (APEX) Champions

The Advanced Practice Educational eXperience (APEX) Champion is the key liaison among the specialty preceptors, student, and clinical host site. Champions assist with the formulation of the longitudinal experience based on school requirements and site offerings while considering additional learning opportunities that will enhance the student experience. The Champions facilitate a tailored experience for students that supports career exploration and readiness in an environment that fosters collaborative learning.



**Ashleigh Cutt, PA-C,
MPAS, BS**

Park Nicollet SmartCare
Clinic, St. Louis Park

I enjoy partnering with patients to help them improve their health and make sure they can continue doing what they love, both at work and beyond. I enjoy primary care as it means I can work with a wide range of patients and I'm constantly learning new information. I also enjoy sports medicine and performing minor procedures. I believe that the patient and clinician make a team, and together we can make the most difference.

While I completed my undergraduate training in engineering, I realized that I wanted to be able to work on a more personal level with people to solve problems and improve outcomes. I enjoy making a difference in the lives of others, and seeing people take charge of their health and wellness.

My husband, two daughters, golden-doodle and I try to spend a lot of time outdoors exploring the Twin Cities. We also love to try new restaurants and are involved with serving at our church. Being with friends is important to us, and we frequently host potlucks and game nights.

Ashleigh will be offering overall program support for the APC Partnership program.



**Danielle Johnson,
PA-C**
Regions Hospital

Becoming a physician assistant was the perfect choice for me as the profession combines my two great passions: helping others and science. I enjoy getting to know my patients and helping them improve their overall well-being so they can live healthier and happier lives. As a physician assistant practicing in hospital medicine I get the privilege of serving patients during some of their most vulnerable times.

I have been working at HealthPartners as a hospitalist since 2015. Originally from South Dakota, I completed my undergraduate studies at the University of Minnesota obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in Nutritional Science. I went on to complete my Master of Physician Assistant Science degree at Augsburg College graduating in 2014.

When I am not working, I relish my time in the simple moments as a wife and mom of two.



**Erin Michael, MSN,
RN, FNP-BC, IBCLC**

Park Nicollet Clinic
and Specialty Center,
Maple Grove

I am a Family Nurse Practitioner working in Med/Peds at the Park Nicollet Maple Grove Regional Center. I obtained both my baccalaureate and Master's degrees from the College of St. Scholastica.

I work in primary care seeing patients ages birth through everything. My main focus is within women's health and family medicine, often seeing multiple generations within the same family. I have a commitment to preventive care, including easy access to long-acting, reversible contraception and providing guidance on vaccine science. I often help guide new families through the art (and work) of raising young children, especially with my prior history as a lactation consultant.

Prior to obtaining my advanced degree as a family nurse practitioner, I worked as a staff nurse both in NICU and the emergency department. I spent over 5 years on active duty in the U.S. Navy, serving along the East Coast and completing two tours of duty in Iraq. As a Navy Nurse, the first mission is to train corpsmen and I have continued to enjoy teaching nursing students since that time. In my spare time, I drive my children to their activities, pick up stray Legos, and fold laundry.



**Matthew Nygren,
DNP AGACNP**
Regions Hospital

I'm originally from North Dakota. I received my BSN from the University of Mary in Bismarck, ND and spent 8 years working as a bedside nurse in Cardiovascular Intensive Care between Fargo, ND and Minneapolis, MN. I received my Doctor of Nursing Practice with my Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner certification from Winona State University.

As a nurse practitioner, I have worked in cardiovascular surgery and various critical care environments. I joined Regions Hospital Medical Intensive Care team in 2021. I enjoy critical care medicine and providing holistic care to the critically ill.

In my spare time, I enjoy going to the dog park with my three dogs Florence, Gertrude, and August. I also enjoy traveling, spending time with family and friends, and spending time outdoors.



Liz Placzek, MD
HealthPartners
Clinic, Maplewood

I have been a Pediatrician with HealthPartners since 2018. I am originally from Omaha, Nebraska, and completed medical school and the University of Nebraska Medical School. I completed my residency in Pediatrics at the University of Arizona. I practice as a general pediatrician at an outpatient clinic and works in the Newborn Nursery at Regions Hospital. I enjoy seeing the variety that outpatient pediatrics offers, as well as forming lasting relationships with families as they grow.



Kelsey Reif, PA-C

HealthPartners
Specialty Center
401 Building

I am originally from Minnesota. I attended Xavier University in Cincinnati, OH and received my undergraduate degree in biology and chemistry. I then went on to Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI and graduated in 2016 with my master's in Physician Assistant Studies. I then returned home to MN to practice.

I started working for HealthPartners in September of 2016 as a general surgery PA, particularly working with elective general surgery as well as colorectal surgery. I assist in a variety of cases including foregut surgery, hernias, diverticulitis, colon cases and benign anorectal procedures. I have a particular interest in robotic surgery and assists in these cases frequently. I also spend her time managing patients in the hospital as well as seeing patients in the outpatient clinic setting.

I have been a leader for PA students since working at HealthPartners. I oversee the PA students during their rotation with general surgery and have very much enjoyed giving back as an educator. This has now evolved into joining the Advance Practice Clinician Advisory Board as a champion for advanced practice provider students.

In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my husband and two kids. I also enjoys being active with biking and running, spending time outdoors, traveling when able, cooking, experiencing new restaurants, and attending live music events.