

The CHP Corner, May 2020

For CHPs, aspiring CHPs, and anyone else on the bell curve.



The American Academy of Health Physics

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ABHP EXAM UPDATE

In this ever-changing environment, please stay up to date on ABHP exam information on our home page at www.aahp-abhp.org.

CHP IN THE SPOTLIGHT: ADAM STAVOLA

Dan Sowers, CHP Corner Editor

This month's CHP in the Spotlight, Adam Stavola, hails from the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility (a.k.a. Jefferson Lab) in Newport News, VA. In addition to his full time job as the dosimetry technical lead as well as the technical lead for the radiological training program and the radioanalytical laboratory, he serves as the website administrator for the VA Chapter of the HPS and is the newly appointed webmaster for the American Academy of Health Physics.



To many, accelerator health physics is the 100 point part II question we eagerly avoid. To Adam, it provides motivation for his rewarding

position at Jefferson Lab, basking in cutting-edge physics research, activating all kinds of materials, and protecting against the varieties of sub-atomic particles the rest of us have only read about in those now dusty, still expensive textbooks.

Adam originally pursued certification to advance his career in health physics. He found great advice from a mentor, Mike Davidson, who advised him to take the NRRPT and the ABHP part I exams as close together as possible. A two year gap between taking

ABHP part I and part II ensued, and Adam stayed current on his health physics exam knowledge by doing some type of health physics exam practice weekly during this period. He followed advice from another mentor who told him “you can't always outsmart a problem, sometimes you have to actually work” and earned his board certification in 2013.

His guidance on studying and ultimately passing? Don't cram! “A slower approach for a long period is much more likely to be successful than studying a large amount of material in a short time.” He made it part of his routine so studying didn't feel like a chore. Loving a challenge, he aimed to “create the most complex problem [he] could think of and then try to solve it; often it would involve activation from an accelerator beam, then finding dose rates, assuming it goes airborne, etc. The harder it is the better prepared you will be.”

He still relishes hearing from another mentor “every click is not created equal,” referring literally to adjusting the energy and channel via amplifier gain, but more generally as not always getting what you expect. Ultimately, he took the comment “have good handwriting” as the best advice he received before sitting for part II. On behalf of the graders who were lucky enough to get his sheets, we thank you Adam.

His only regret? Not getting involved with the greater health physics community (HPS, AAHP, ABHP) sooner. He adamantly encourages YOU to get involved in whatever way you can, as soon as you can!

As Adam maintains a focus on continuous learning, he is steadfast in his commitment to make a profound impact both locally and nationally to our world of health physics. Why not take a look at an accelerator question this afternoon? You never know where that curiosity may lead you. Cheers to Adam, the CHP in the Spotlight!