

2017 Barbara Knothe Burn Therapist Achievement Award

Kristen L. Ause-Ellias PT, MPT



Kristen has been a member of the ABA for 26 years since attending her first meeting in 1991. She has dedicated her entire career to burn rehabilitation working at two major burn centers – first at the Cook County Burn Center in Chicago, IL and currently at the Miami Valley Burn Center in Dayton, OH. She has immersed herself in burn rehabilitation since graduating in 1987 with a Master’s Degree in Physical Therapy and continues to develop her skills and learning on a daily basis without fanfare, much like Barb Knothe herself.

Kristen has a thirst for knowledge and makes every effort to build her skill set and more importantly shares that knowledge with others. She has co-moderated at Sunrise Symposium and has presented abstracts and as well burn rehabilitation publications in addition to delivering abstracts at several regional burn meetings. Kristen’s primary area of knowledge contribution is most often within innovative poster abstracts on her novel approaches to burn rehabilitation and patient care. Additionally, she also volunteered her time on two international burn outreaches with ‘Operation Smile’ to India and Vietnam respectively.

Kristen is a hardworking, tireless clinician that lives outside the spotlight. For her ongoing and outstanding efforts, she has been recognized by her hospital employer three times for her dedication to patient care including 2015 when she was named ‘Employee of the Year’ for the entire hospital. Additionally, in recognition for her contributions and efforts that same year, she was selected as a finalist for Healthcare Worker of the Year in her home state of Ohio.

Notwithstanding her focus in daily practice, Kristen was also responsible for introducing into burn rehabilitation the current clinical practice of laser scanning faces to create burn face masks. Through her impetus, she coordinated a joint venture between the local military facility that was performing laser scanning of fighter pilots for helmets and O₂ masks and the burn unit to trial laser scanning faces and creating positive face molds through use of a CAD/CAM milling machine process. The novelty of this advancement merited a research study grant funded by the International Association of Fire Fighters and has served to spur much of the foundation for the current scanning for face masks in practice today.

Kristen embodies the ideal stalwart clinical burn role. She continues to push the limits of her skills and strives to learn and share amongst her colleagues and friends. She embodies a passion for burn rehabilitation that shines in her what her patients are able to achieve when working with her. Her unheralded contributions to burn rehabilitation can be seen in the outcomes of her daily practice and in her enduring commitment to burn care.