LISA ZAHAKOS

RPA-C | Clinical and Professional Curriculum Vitae

New Jersey | lisazahakos@gmail.com | heartreserve.blog

Professional Profile

Physician assistant with clinical experience from 2003–2018 in interventional cardiology, executive, preventive and integrative medicine, psychiatry and addiction medicine. Founder of Heart Reserve, medical writer, educator and patient-family advocate. Since 2018, focused on family advocacy and, more recently, women's heart-health education. Brings clinical experience and a mother's perspective to clear medical communication.

Professional Leadership

2025–Present | Founder, Medical Writer and Podcast Host

Heart Reserve

Created Heart Story, a free appointment-preparation tool that helps women organize the history and questions they choose to share with a clinician. Every section is optional; users can save or print a summary without an email address or account.

Write plain-English articles and worksheets on women's cardiovascular health, pregnancy history, bloodwork and midlife. Create and host the Heart Reserve podcast. Website: heartreserve.blog; podcast and guest interviews: heartreserve.blog/podcast.

Editorial and Medical Education Work

2026–Present | Associate Editor, HEART RESERVE Project

CardioSmart, American College of Cardiology

Brings clinical and lived experience to the HEART RESERVE project within CardioSmart. Project goals and editorial scope are being developed with the team.

2026–Present | Medical Education Developer and PA Narrator

Developing Pregnancy Is Heart History, a case-based CME/CE initiative on reproductive history and cardiovascular and metabolic care. Lead educational concept development, medical writing, clinical case design and narration.

Global Education Group: accreditation planning, grant development, proposal review and preparation of grant materials.

myCME / Haymarket Medical Education: program, audience and outcomes planning, with a written proposal for hosting and distribution of an enduring activity, assessments and follow-up evaluation.

ReachMD: separate program-development discussions and feedback on educational gaps, women's cardiovascular risk, obesity and diabetes, outcomes and digital formats.

Activities remain in development. Clinical, accreditation and platform approvals, funding and launch are pending; no pilot is active.

Research and Manuscript Development

Develop research questions on reproductive history and cardiovascular risk in consultation with Women's Health Initiative investigators.

Author of Love Your Heart, a trade nonfiction book on women's heart health. A full earlier draft is complete; revision is in progress.

Clinical Experience

2014–2018 | Physician Assistant, Jersey Medical Care, P.C.

Matawan, New Jersey. Provided outpatient psychiatric evaluation, medication management and follow-up. Monitored treatment response, medication effects, interactions and adherence; coordinated additional medical evaluation and patient education.

2008–2014 | Physician Assistant, PATH Medical

New York City. Provided cardiovascular assessment and executive physicals at Dr. Eric R. Braverman's integrative medicine practice, PATH Medical (Place for Achieving Total Health). Reviewed symptoms, history, blood pressure, lipids, glucose, ECGs and prior cardiac testing in preventive, hormone and metabolic care. Contributed through patient care to the practice's clinical research activities associated with PATH Foundation NY, whose published research examined menopause, hormones, body composition and cognition. Volunteered with the practice's Wounded Warrior Program.

2003–2008 | Physician Assistant, Ayman E. Farid, MD

New York. Worked in interventional cardiology, performing and interpreting nuclear stress tests, performing and monitoring exercise treadmill tests, and interpreting Holter recordings. Provided cardiovascular assessment, medication management, follow-up and prevention counseling.

Advocacy and Community Leadership

2018–Present | Patient-Family Ambassador and Consultant, USFetus

Support families worldwide navigating twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome (TTTS), selective intrauterine growth restriction (SIUGR), fetal surgery and the NICU. Provide one-to-one peer support, help parents organize questions and find credible information, and connect families with specialist evaluation and second-opinion pathways.

Alongside USFetus work, contribute videos with my twin sons to the TTTS Foundation's annual December awareness campaign, coordinating with founder Mary Slaman.

2018–Present | Founder and Writer, Peter and Maurice

Created a real-time family blog documenting twin pregnancy, fetal surgery, premature birth and the NICU. Author-reported historical readership of more than 58,000 views, with family connections across TTTS, SIUGR and NICU communities. Blog: peterandmaurice.wordpress.com.

2020–2022 | Founder, Sew Away Corona

Founded and led a grassroots COVID-19 relief network that delivered more than 500,000 masks to frontline workers. Mobilized professional seamstresses, 20 Broadway costume designers and community volunteers; matched hospital requests with makers and supplies. Directed partner outreach, sourcing, volunteer coordination, packing, shipping and distribution.

Led two Citi collaborations: frontline-worker care packages and back-to-school donations. Hospital recipients included Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and NewYork-Presbyterian Queens; school donations reached The Midland School and John P. Stevens High School. Citi Treasury and Trade Services publicly acknowledged the collaboration on June 30, 2020.

Designed mask adapters and coordinated 3D printing to help relieve strap pressure for healthcare workers and children. Organized a Lush-supported campaign to donate 3,000 gift bags to frontline hospital workers in New York and New Jersey; mobilized support from Supergoop! and community partners.

Early reporting documented 2,000 group members within a week and 5,000 surgical masks procured (NJ 101.5), plus 2,000+ masks made and sent to at least five NYC hospitals (NY City Lens). The GoFundMe campaign raised $12,323 from 237 donations.

Selected Published Writing and Features

Health Story Collaborative — “When the Clinician Becomes the Patient” (October 20, 2026). Personal essay. Read online

She Said Next — “Pregnancy and Heart Health: The Surprising Link After 50” (October 17, 2026). Guest article. Read online

The Mother Chapter — “My Twins Were Born at 28 Weeks. I Didn’t Know That Was Part of My Medical History, Too” (September 9, 2026). Read online

Society for Women’s Health Research (SWHR) — “Lisa Zahakos’s Women’s Health Journey” (October 13, 2026). Read online

World Heart Federation — World Heart Day first-person story (September 11, 2026). Read online

Healthcare IT Today — “A Better Health Record Should Show What Changed, Not Just What Was Measured” (September 18, 2026). Read online

Women of Wearables — “WoW Woman in Women’s Health — Lisa Zahakos, founder of HEART RESERVE” (September 14, 2026). Interview. Read online

The Mighty — “What It’s Like to Have Preemies Healing From TTTS” (October 29, 2018). Published as Lisa Signorile Zahakos. Read online

The Mighty — “To My Husband, Who Carried Our Family When Our Twins Were Born Prematurely” (October 27, 2018). Read online

Published Podcast Interviews

Healthy Mom Healthy Baby Tennessee, Episode 236 — “Heart Reserve with Lisa Zahakos, RPA-C” (October 16, 2026). Tennessee Initiative for Perinatal Quality Care. Read online

Beyond the Beeps, Episode 27 — “What Does It Really Take to Save Twins With TTTS?” (September 29, 2026). Read online

Recorded Interviews Awaiting Publication

Graham’s Foundation — Interview with founder Nicholas Hall recorded September 30, 2026; release pending.

Physician Assistant History Society — Oral-history interview recorded October 6, 2026; editing underway.

Dear NICU Mama — Interview recorded October 19, 2026; release pending. A second conversation and audience Q&A are being discussed.

Community Education in Development

Developing maternal-health education and resource-sharing conversations with NICU Strong and FLRRiSH. Coordinating a proposed November Prematurity Awareness Month contribution with Once Upon A Preemie; outreach to Hand to Hold is underway.

Recognition

Finalist, Inspiring Change Leader of the Year, Women in Change Awards 2026.

Nominee, 2026 AMA Honors Excellence in Communication Award. Nanette K. Wenger, MD, provided a letter supporting the nomination based on her review of selected writing.

Education and Credentials

Wagner College, Physician Assistant Program, completed 2003. Nationally certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants; licensed in New Jersey and New York.

Profiles: LinkedIn profile | HEART RESERVE on LinkedIn | Instagram | TikTok | Spotify

Channels: HEART RESERVE | Articles | Letter | Interviews | Peter and Maurice | Sew Away Corona