

What are Physician Assistants?

Physician Assistants, commonly known as “PAs”, practice medicine with supervision by licensed physicians.

The Physician/PA Team:

The relationship between a PA and his or her supervising physician is one of mutual trust and respect. The physician assistant is a delegate for the physician, treating the patient in the style and manner developed and directed by the supervising physician. Physician assistant practice is centered on patient care and may include educational, research and administrative activities.

Reimbursement:

Employers receive reimbursement for physician services provided by a PA under Medicare (85% in all settings) and Tri-Care. In addition, most private insurance companies and state Medicaid programs also reimburse employers for physician services provided by a PA.

Employment settings:

- Solo and group physicians' offices
- Hospital and HMOs
- Urban and rural health centers
- Community clinics and research centers
- Private companies and public health agencies
- Veteran Administration medical centers
- Nursing homes and rehabilitation centers
- Correctional and academic institutions

What can PAs do?

The tasks physician assistants perform depend on their practice setting, employment, experience, and state laws and regulations. They also depend on the specialty of the physician who supervises the PA . All states require the PA to be registered or licensed by a state board.

PA Responsibilities:

- Performing physical examinations
- Compiling patient medical histories
- Ordering and interpreting diagnostic testing, including electrocardiograms and other tests
- Performing therapeutic procedures, including suturing and cast removal
- Developing/monitoring patient treatment plans, based on medical diagnoses
- Counseling patients about preventive care, treatment options and risk management (including crisis intervention)
- Prescribing medication
- Ensuring the patient's general wellness
- Providing patient education
- Acting as first and second assist in surgery
- Providing emergency medical services

What does it take to be a PA?

The 120 accredited physician assistant programs are located at medical colleges and universities, teaching hospitals and through the Armed Forces. The average program is 111 weeks long. The initial stages of the PA program consist primarily of classroom and laboratory instruction in basic medical and behavioral sciences. The latter stages consist of intensive, hands-on clinical rotations in multiple medical disciplines and settings.

The majority of students have a BA/BS degree and 48 months of health care experience before admission to a PA program. All programs must meet the same standard curriculum essentials under the guidance of the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs.

To obtain certification:

The PA must successfully complete the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination developed jointly by the National Board of Medical Examiners and by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants. Logging 100 CME hours biannually and passing a recertification exam every 6 years is required to maintain certification.

Physicians & Physician Assistants...



Financial and Clinical Benefits

Benefits to the practice:

- Quicker scheduling
- General increase in net income
- Enlarging the practice size while saving the physician (s) time
- Expansion of office sites
- Expansion of office hours
- Triage of phone calls and test results
- Office/personnel management role

Benefits to the Physician

- No addition to physician work load
- Increased time to spend in OR and the hospital
- Increased time for "more complex" patient management
- More openings for consultations
- Increased time for procedures
- Split night and weekend call
- More efficient hospital rounds
- Help with medical record completion

Benefits to the patient:

- More time per patient encounter
- Extended office hours
- Same day walk-in care
- Increased access in reaching medical provider by phone

Expansion of Services

- Patient education
- Nursing home rounds
- Women's health
- Home visit program
- Rehab/sports medicine program
- Rural health clinic certification

Pennsylvania Regulatory Boards:

State Medical Board

P.O. Box 2649
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649
(717) 787-2381

State Board of Osteopathic Medicine

P.O. Box 2649
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649
(717) 783-4858

American Academy of Physician Assistants

950 North Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-1552
(703) 836-2272
Fax: (703) 684-1924
<http://www.aapa.org>

National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants

12000 Findley Road, Suite 200
Duluth, GA 30097-1409
(678) 417-8100
<http://www.nccpa.net>

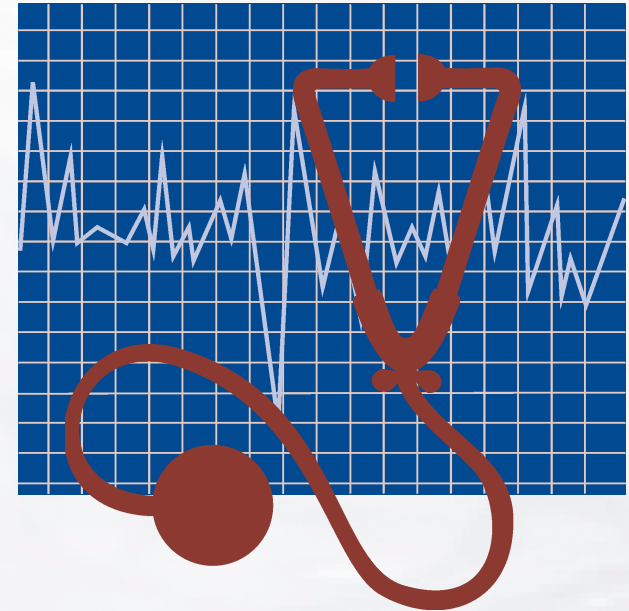
Physician Assistant Education Association

950 North Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 548-5538

Pennsylvania Society of Physician Assistants

P.O. Box 128
Greensburg, PA 15601
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Add a Practice Asset by Hiring a Physician Assistant....



Clinical & Financial Benefits