



Southeastern Ky. Physician Assistant Needs Assessment

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UK

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Center for Excellence in Rural Health

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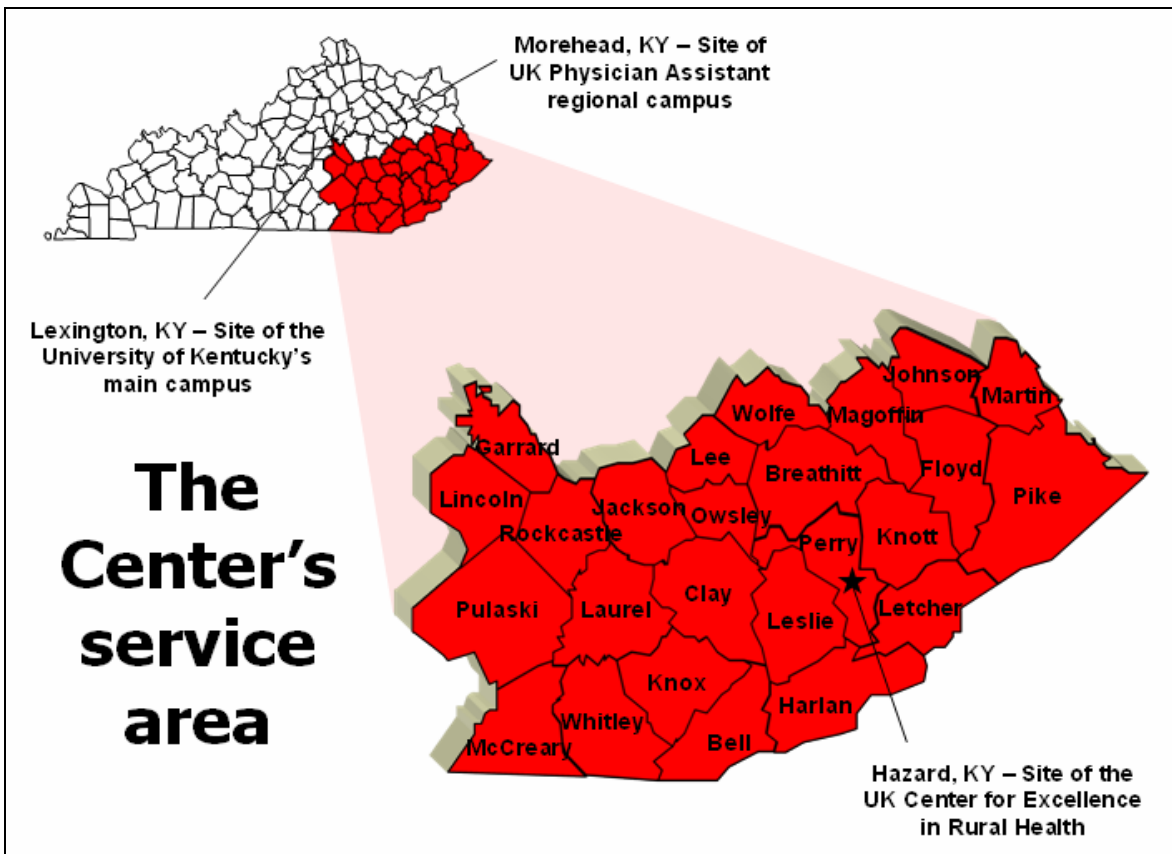
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On the cover: Dr. Vivian Ong, right, an Irvine pediatrician, reviews a patient chart with Kendra Robertson, a physician assistant she supervises. Ong’s office serves multiple southeastern Kentucky counties.

Introduction

The mission of the University of Kentucky Center for Excellence in Rural Health (the Center), based in Hazard, is to improve the health of rural Kentuckians through education, research, service and community engagement. To accomplish the educational component of its mission, the Center provides several rural-based health professions training programs – e.g., family medicine and dental residency programs, doctorate of physical therapy, master’s of social work, bachelor’s degree in clinical leadership and management. In all, there have been more than 300 graduates of the Center’s academic programs. The primary objective of these programs is to ensure an adequate, well-distributed supply of health care professionals throughout rural Kentucky, but particularly within the Center’s 25-county service area (*see map below*).

This is a region plagued by persistent poverty, low educational attainment and, as a result, poor health status. Of Kentucky’s 120 counties, eight of the 10 least-healthy are located within the Center’s service area (Owsley, 111; Knott, 114; Lee, 115; McCreary, 116; Perry, 117; Harlan, 118; Clay, 119; and Wolfe, 120).¹ Multiple counties within the region have been designated as economically distressed by the Appalachian Regional Commission. Area residents also disproportionately lack health coverage, with uninsured rates exceeding 20 percent in several counties and reaching as high as 24 percent in McCreary County.² Poverty-stricken and uninsured residents tend to be less healthy, thus requiring more medical attention.



Further exacerbating the issue, however, is southeastern Kentucky's chronic shortage of health care providers. Most counties in the region are federally designated as health professional shortage areas for primary care. Each area development district wholly contained within the Center's service area has a physician-to-population ratio far below the state average of 213.5 per 100,000 residents (Cumberland Valley, 131.7; Kentucky River, 142.9; and Big Sandy, 192).³

Historically, the physician assistant profession "has provided medical care in areas of the country where fewer physicians have chosen to locate."⁴ And, "as extenders of physician services in the United States health care system, physician assistants are well-suited to improve access to care in health care shortage areas, particularly rural locations."⁵ Physician assistants practice medicine under the supervision of a licensed physician as part of a health care team. Among other things, physician assistants typically conduct physical examinations, order and interpret laboratory tests, establish tentative diagnoses and treatment plans, counsel patients on preventive health care, and assist in surgeries. In 2006, the median income for PAs in full-time clinical practice was more than \$80,000.⁶

While nearly 140 physician assistant training programs exist in the United States, the Bluegrass State is home to but one. The University of Kentucky Physician Assistant Program, housed within the UK College of Health Sciences in Lexington, admits 40 students each year. The program also maintains a regional campus at Morehead State University in northeastern Kentucky that admits 14 students annually. Each of these sites is approximately two hours' driving distance from Hazard, southeastern Kentucky's geographic midpoint, and up to three hours away from the Center's service area counties that border Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. Meanwhile, 29 states – including each of Kentucky's seven border states – have multiple physician assistant training programs.⁷ (*For a complete list of PA training programs, see Appendix A*).

For these reasons, the Center initiated this needs assessment to determine the current status of physician assistants within its service area. Among the project's purposes were:

- To determine whether southeastern Kentucky has a shortage of physician assistants relative to state and national averages;
- To survey the predicted future demand for physician assistants among the region's health care providers;
- To assess the depth of the potential applicant pool for a proposed physician assistant regional campus based at the Center; and, ultimately,
- To provide data that UK and Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc., officials could use to evaluate the need for a PA regional campus in Hazard.

Methodology

In May 2008, 372 health care leaders, managers and physicians throughout a 25-county area of southeastern Kentucky were asked by the Center to participate in a survey to

assess regional demand for physician assistants (*for the complete survey, see Appendix B*). The chief executive officers, human resources managers, physicians and/or practice managers at hospitals, federally funded community health centers, rural health centers, primary care centers, along with a variety of general and specialty physicians, were surveyed by mail and/or telephone. The survey was designed to measure the current level of physician assistant employment at their facilities, as well as the anticipated need for more PAs in the next three to five years. Survey participants also were asked to rank the difficulty level of recruiting physician assistants in their respective service areas and to share any additional comments. One hundred surveys (a response rate of 26.8 percent) were received from participants.

Electronic records of the Kentucky Medical Licensure Board were researched on April 21, 2008, to track the number of active, licensed physician assistants in Kentucky by county of employment. These data were used, along with each county's latest U.S. Census Bureau population statistics, to determine the ratio of physician assistants per 10,000 people. Table 1 (*page 5*) illustrates the disparity among regional, state and national ratios.

To verify that an adequate applicant pool exists to support the proposed PA training program, educational attainment demographics were obtained from the most recent U.S. Census Bureau data. Other Internet research included analysis of the electronic records of the Kentucky Board of Nursing.

Findings

A. Geographic Discrepancy

According to the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure, there were 845 licensed physician assistants in the state as of April 15, 2008. Therefore, with a total estimated population of just over 4.2 million,⁸ Kentucky has 2.01 physician assistants for every 10,000 residents. This compares unfavorably to the national ratio of 2.62 PAs per 10,000 residents.⁹ While Kentucky's per capita ratio of physician assistants outpaces all but two of its contiguous states (Virginia and West Virginia), the Commonwealth ranks just 36th nationally in its number of PAs relative to population.¹⁰

The service area's PA-to-population ratio of 1.47 for every 10,000 residents represents a 26% undersupply relative to the state average and is 43% below the national rate.

In general, rural Kentucky appears to be well served by physician assistants, despite a 13 percent decline in PA rural practice during a recent three-year period.¹¹ As of 2004, nearly 40 percent of the state's physician assistants practiced in a non-metropolitan area – double the national rate of 19 percent.¹² Yet the PA equation is particularly bleak within the Center's rural service area. There, according to the medical licensure board, only 94 physician assistants are helping to care for more than 640,000 people (*see Table 1, page 5*). This PA-to-population ratio of just 1.47 for every 10,000 residents represents a 26

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percent undersupply relative to the state average and is *43 percent below* the national rate. Another way of expressing the deficiency is this: The Center’s service area has 15.2 percent of the state’s total population but only 11.1 percent of its physician assistants.

But even these statistics do not fully illustrate the sporadic availability of physician assistants within southeastern Kentucky. The vast majority (70.2 percent) of the area’s PAs are concentrated within six counties that contain regional medical centers – Laurel and Pike, 14 each; Pulaski, 12; Perry, 11, Whitley, 8; and Floyd, 7. That leaves 28 physician assistants working within the remaining 19 counties. Each of those counties has three or fewer physician assistants, and three counties – Bell, Knox and Owsley – are void of a single practicing PA, according to the medical licensure board.

Table 1.

County	Population	# of PAs, based on work address	PA-to-Population ratio, per 10,000 residents
Bell	29,544	0	0
Breathitt	15,924	3	1.88
Clay	24,052	2	0.83
Floyd	42,282	7	1.66
Garrard	16,933	1	0.59
Harlan	31,692	3	0.95
Jackson	13,810	1	0.72
Johnson	24,188	2	0.83
Knott	17,536	2	1.14
Knox	32,527	0	0
Laurel	56,979	14	2.46
Lee	7,748	1	1.29
Leslie	11,973	1	0.84
Letcher	24,520	3	1.22
Lincoln	25,361	1	0.39
Magoffin	13,449	2	1.49
Martin	12,093	1	0.83
McCreary	17,354	1	0.58
Owsley	4,690	0	0
Perry	29,753	11	3.70
Pike	66,860	14	2.09
Pulaski	59,749	12	2.01
Rockcastle	16,857	1	0.59
Whitley	38,142	8	2.10
Wolfe	7,095	3	4.23
Service area	641,111	94	1.47
Kentucky	4,206,074	845	2.01
U.S.	304,365,713	79,706	2.62

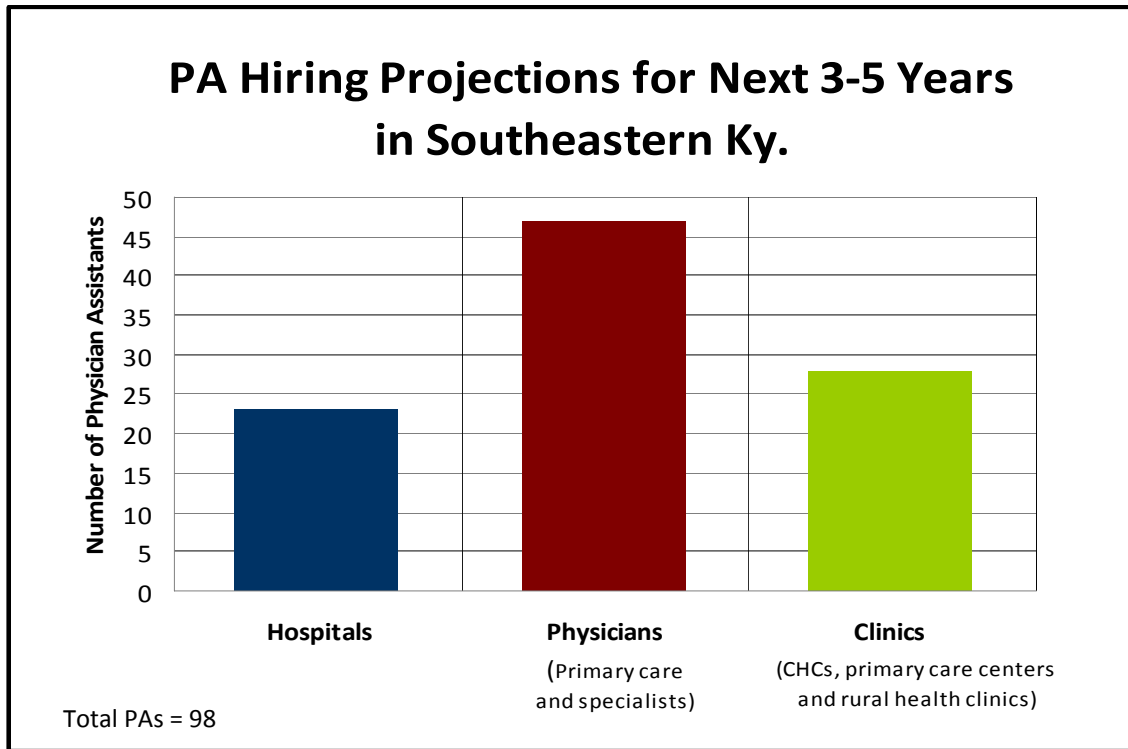
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 estimate; Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure; American Academy of Physician Assistants

B. Demand

State, national and local provider-to-population ratios confirm an undersupply of physician assistants by as much as 26 to 43 percent in southeastern Kentucky. The current and future regional demand for physician assistants is further validated by the results of a survey conducted in May 2008 by the Center.

Nearly 400 health care executives, physicians and managers were invited to participate in the survey. One hundred responses were received, with an overwhelming majority confirming their need for – and subsequent difficulty in recruiting – physician assistants. This group collectively documented a need for 84 full-time and 14 part-time physician assistants during the next three to five years (*see Chart 1 below*).

Chart 1.



All 21 hospitals in the targeted region participated. Forty-eight percent of hospital officials responded that they anticipate hiring physician assistants during the next three to five years, with more than half of that group saying they plan to add between two and five new PAs. Hospitals throughout the region report plans to add a total of 20 full-time and three part-time physician assistants by 2013. Similarly, 100 percent of federally qualified community health centers in the targeted service area also responded to the survey. Of those, 60 percent indicated the need to add more physician assistants, with a total projected need for 8 full-time and 2 part-time PAs. As many as 29 additional physician assistants will be needed, according to the surveys returned by primary care and specialty physicians in the service area.

The PA profession is projected to be the fastest-growing health care occupation in the Big Sandy, Cumberland Valley and Kentucky River area development districts (ADDs) through the year 2014.¹³ Ten-year projections included in a 2007 report by the Kentucky Department for Workforce Investment range from a 39.1 percent increase in the Big Sandy ADD, to 48.1 percent for the Cumberland Valley ADD, to 49 percent for the Kentucky River ADD, which includes the Center's proposed PA regional campus site. In order to fulfill this occupational outlook, the report estimates an average of 13 new job openings will exist each year through 2014 for the three districts.

Recruiting health care professionals continues to be an ongoing challenge for most facilities in our region. As one might expect, facilities indicating the greatest need for physician assistants were also among the ones that expressed the greatest difficulty with recruiting. For example, 89 percent of all community health centers and more than 70 percent of all hospitals ranked recruiting as being moderately to very difficult on a five-point Likert scale (*for the complete survey, see Appendix B*).

Also, as the general population is aging, so are physicians. In fact, due in large part to their lengthy training, physicians are among the oldest health care professionals, with 30 percent at age 55 or older.¹⁴ This should not be overlooked in regard to the growing demand for physician assistants.

Specifically within Kentucky, approximately 400 family physicians are age 60 or above.¹⁵ The Center's service area is further impacted by statistics that indicate a higher percentage of rural physicians practice into advanced age. While the state's physician workforce is comprised of a higher percentage of urban doctors under age 44, rural Kentucky physicians make up the bulk of every other age category – 45-54, 55-64, 65-74 and over age 75.¹⁶ At the same time, the state's rural medical residency programs, as they now exist, realistically can be expected to produce only 16 to 18 new family physicians each year.¹⁷

As aging physicians work fewer hours and minimize patient loads as they transition into retirement, it is likely that PAs will be more heavily relied upon in coming years to bridge the health care service gap.

In examining the regional employment market by provider, the service area shares some commonalities with a 2007 national report from the American Academy of Physician Assistants.¹⁸ The national report shows 57 percent of physician assistants are employed by physicians or group practices, 23 percent by hospitals and nearly six percent by community health centers. This is similar to the forecasting by providers participating in the Center's survey. The majority of providers that currently employ physician assistants indicate they anticipate hiring additional PAs in the next three to five years. Perhaps more importantly, 40 percent of those not currently using PAs indicate an interest in adding one or more to their staff during that same time period. This is a forecast of immense need today and one that is expected to extend into the foreseeable future.

C. Regional Applicant Pool

Nearly 58,000 residents in the Center's service area have attained a bachelor's degree or higher, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Of those, nearly 900 hold a bachelors of science in nursing. These examples demonstrate that there are local, qualified individuals who can meet the requirements for admission into the physician assistant program at UK.

A sizable number of potential applicants are those working in the health care field. Nurses and medical technologists, for example, already have health care knowledge and experience and are likely to have already completed some or all of the pre-requisite courses such as organic chemistry, microbiology, anatomy and physiology.

In recent years, the Center has worked with UK's main campus to establish several successful academic programs in Hazard. Currently, family medicine and dental residency programs, a doctorate in physical therapy, a master's in social work and a bachelor's in clinical leadership and management are being offered. Combined, these programs have produced more than 300 graduates. The Center anticipates similar success should a physician assistant training program be established in Hazard.

Conclusion

Access to health care services is vital to the well-being of all Kentuckians. For decades, though, southeastern Kentucky has suffered a chronic shortage of physicians, creating a situation that – along with poverty and residents' poor lifestyle choices – has resulted in unfavorable health status.

As this needs assessment has documented, the region also confronts a sizable deficiency in its physician assistant workforce. Only 94 PAs were in clinical practice within the Center's 25-county service area as of April 15, 2008. This equates to a physician assistant-to-population ratio of 1.47 for every 10,000 residents – or an *undersupply of 26 percent compared to the state average and 43 percent below the national rate.*

Such a scarcity of PAs further limits the primary care and preventive services available to area residents. Multiple factors contribute to this geographic maldistribution:

■ It is noted in the literature that areas with greater numbers of physicians and population tend to have more physician assistants. Because physicians and PAs work as a health care team, southeastern Kentucky's undersupply of physician assistants is somewhat related to its physician shortage. The region, which consists entirely of rural-designated counties, also lacks a major population center.

■ Another issue, which was emphasized in numerous responses to the Center's physician assistant needs assessment survey, is some facilities' preference for nurse practitioners. This is due in part to Kentucky's "uniquely restrictive"¹⁹ requirements for physician supervision of new PA graduates. The state recently relaxed those requirements by reducing from 24 to 18 the number of continuous months of experience a new physician

assistant must have prior to practicing in a “nonseparate location.” However, the definition of that phrase will be expanded, effective in July, to include various off-site settings – provided that the supervising physician is available at all times via telecommunications. Conversely, Kentucky is one of 23 states with “independent NP practice,” or no requirement for physician involvement. In Kentucky, only nurse practitioners who prescribe medications must have a collaborative agreement with a physician. It is not surprising, then, that the Kentucky Board of Nursing reports that nearly 2,000 nurse practitioners are licensed in the state, compared to 845 physician assistants.

■ The state’s only physician assistant training program is located in central Kentucky, with a satellite campus based in the Commonwealth’s northeast corner. In either case, the instruction site is two hours or more away from the majority of southeastern Kentucky counties. At the same time, most PA students have nearly three years of health care experience before being admitted to a program.²⁰ This combination limits the ability of local residents – particularly those who are in mid-career or have started a family – to travel in search of an advanced degree, even one as financially rewarding as a master of science in physician assistant studies.

The latter item leads to the consideration that the state’s physician assistants seem likely to work near the geographic area in which they are educated. Kentucky, for instance, has retained a higher percentage of in-state trained PAs than most other states.²¹ This validates a long-held premise of the Center – that health care professionals tend to practice near the area in which they receive their terminal training. For instance, more than 75 percent of graduates from the family medicine residency program based at the Center – and nearly 90 percent of its physical therapy alumni – currently work in rural Kentucky. Other rural medicine training programs, such as the Pikeville College School of Osteopathic Medicine, are based on the same rationale.

Besides a severe shortage of physician assistants in southeastern Kentucky, the Center’s needs assessment determined that:

■ *A robust marketplace for physician assistants exists in southeastern Kentucky.* Surveyed hospitals, clinics and physician’s offices indicated a combined interest in hiring 84 full-time physician assistants within the next three to five years, as well as 14 part-time PAs.

■ *There is an adequate applicant pool of prospective physician assistant students.* Nearly 58,000 southeastern Kentucky residents have earned at least a bachelor’s degree, which is a requirement for admission to UK’s physician assistant studies program.

Also of importance is the support that health care providers throughout the Center's service area seem to have for a regional PA training site. As evidence, here is a sampling of comments collected during the survey process:

- “All mid-level health care providers are a valuable resource to the M.D. There should be educational opportunities for *both* PAs and NPs in our area.” – *Dr. Brahmaji Puram*, a family physician from Pikeville;
- “[I] really appreciate [the] UK PA program and would feel great about hiring someone from a UK program.” – *Ancil Lewis*, executive director of Big Sandy Health Care Inc., a community health center organization based in Prestonsburg; and
- “A training program would be wonderful at Hazard.” – *Dr. Eunice Louise Johnson*, a gynecologist from Jackson.

This report has documented the need for physician assistants to be trained within southeastern Kentucky, with the hope that graduates would be more inclined to practice in the region. The prolonged success of UK's physician assistant satellite campus at Morehead demonstrates that this rural-based model can be successful. It is our hope that the Center's proposal to establish a six-student, regional physician assistant training campus in Hazard by 2010 is favorably received.

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- ¹⁸ American Academy of Physician Assistants. (2007). 2007 AAPA physician assistant census report. Retrieved June 17, 2008, from <http://www.aapa.org/research/07census-content.html>.
- ¹⁹ University of Kentucky College of Health Sciences, p. 1.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Perry, Amburgey, Clark, Payne & Seppenfield.

Appendix A

- Physician assistant training programs in the U.S.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAMS

Programs Accredited by ARC-PA Accepting Students

ALABAMA

University of Alabama at Birmingham - M
Surgical Physician Assistant Program
 School of Health Related Professions
 RMSB 481; 1530 3rd Avenue South
 Birmingham, AL 35294-1212
 205/934-4605

University of South Alabama - M
Department of Physician Assistant Studies
 1504 Springhill Avenue, Room 4410
 Mobile, AL 36604-3273
 251/434-3641

ARIZONA

Arizona School of Health Sciences - M
Department of PA Studies
 5850 East Still Circle
 Mesa, AZ 85206
 480/219-6000

Midwestern University - M
Physician Assistant Program
 1955 North 59th Avenue
 Glendale, AZ 85308-6813
 623/572-3215

ARKANSAS

Harding University - M
Physician Assistant Program
 BOX 12231
 Searcy, Arkansas 72149
 501/279-5624

CALIFORNIA

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science - C, B
Physician Assistant Program
 College of Health Sciences
 1731 East 120th Street
 Los Angeles, CA 90059
 323/563-5879

Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California - M
Physician Assistant Program
 Department of Family Medicine
 1000 South Fremont Avenue, Unit 7
 Building A-6 - Room 6429
 Alhambra, CA 91803-8897
 626/457-4240 or 626/457-4247

Loma Linda University - M
Physician Assistant Program
 School of Allied Health Professions
 Nichol Hall, Room 2033
 Loma Linda, CA 92350-0001
 909/558-7295

Riverside County Regional Medical Center/ Riverside Community College - C, A
Primary Care PA Program
 16130 Lasselle Street
 Moreno Valley, CA 92551
 951/571-6166

Samuel Merritt College - M
Physician Assistant Program
 450 30th Street, Ste. 4708
 Oakland, CA 94609
 510/869-6623

San Joaquin Valley College - A, B, M
Primary Care PA Program
 8400 West Mineral King Avenue
 Visalia, CA 93291
 559/651-2500, 800/997-7582

Stanford University School of Medicine - C, A, M
Primary Care Associate Program
 Family Nurse Practitioner/Physician Assistant Program
 1215 Welch Road, Modular G
 Palo Alto, CA 94305-5408
 650/725-6959

Touro University -California
College of Health Sciences - M
Physician Assistant Program
 Office of Admissions
 1310 Johnson Lane
 Vallejo, CA 94592
 888/652-7580

Univ. of California-Davis - C
Physician Assistant Program/Family Nurse Practitioner Program
 Department of Family & Community Medicine
 2516 Stockton Blvd, Suite 254
 Sacramento, CA 95817-2208
 916/734-3551

Western University of Health Sciences - M
Primary Care Physician Assistant Program
 309 E. Second Street
 Pomona, CA 91766-1854
 909/469-5378

COLORADO

Red Rocks Community College - C, B, M opt.
Physician Assistant Program
 13300 West 6th Avenue
 Denver, CO 80228-1255
 303/914-6386

University of Colorado at Denver Health Sciences Center - M
Child Health Associate/ PA Program
 P O Box 6508, Mail Stop F543
 Aurora, CO 80045
 303/315-7963

CONNECTICUT

Quinnipiac University - C, M
Physician Assistant Program
 Office of Graduate Admissions (AB-GRD)
 275 Mount Carmel Avenue
 Hamden, CT 06518-1908
 203/582-8672

Yale University - M
Physician Associate Program
 School of Medicine
 47 College Street, Suite 220
 New Haven, CT 06510
 203/785-2860

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

George Washington University - C, M, MPH
Physician Assistant Program
 900 23rd Street NW, Suite 6148
 Washington, DC 20037
 202/994-6661

Howard University - C, B
Physician Assistant Program
 College of Pharmacy, Nursing and Allied Health Sciences
 6th & Bryant Streets, NW, Annex I
 Washington, DC 20059
 202/806-7536

FLORIDA

Barry University - C, M
Physician Assistant Program
 School of Graduate Medical Sciences
 11300 NE Second Avenue, Box SGMS
 Miami Shores, FL 33161-6695
 305/899-3296

Miami-Dade College - A
Physician Assistant Program
 Medical Center Campus
 950 NW 20th Street
 Miami, FL 33127-4693
 305/237-4124

Nova Southeastern University Ft. Lauderdale - M
Physician Assistant Program
 3200 South University Drive
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33328
 954/262-1250

Nova Southeastern University Naples - B, M
Physician Assistant Program
 2655 Northbrook Drive
 Naples, FL 34119
 239/591-4528

Nova Southeastern University Orlando - M
Physician Assistant Program
 4850 Millenia Blvd
 Orlando, FL 32839
 407/264-5150

University of Florida - C, M
Physician Assistant Program
 PO Box 100176
 Gainesville, FL 32610-0176
 352/265-7955

GEORGIA

Emory University School of Medicine - M
Department of Family and Preventive Medicine
Physician Assistant Program
 1462 Clifton Road, Suite 280
 Atlanta, GA 30322
 404/727-7825 or 404/727-7827

Medical College of Georgia - M
Physician Assistant Department
 AE 1032
 Augusta, GA 30912
 706/721-3246

Mercer University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences - M
Physician Assistant Program
 3001 Mercer University Drive
 Atlanta, GA 30341
 678/547-6214

South University - M
Physician Assistant Program
709 Mall Blvd.
Savannah, GA 31406
912/201-8025

IDAHO

Idaho State University - C, M
Department of Physician Assistant Studies
Campus Box 8253, 1023 S. Red Hill Road
Pocatello, ID 83209-8253
208/282-4726

ILLINOIS

John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County
Malcolm X College - C, A, M
Physician Assistant Program
1900 West Van Buren Street
Suite #3241
Chicago, IL 60612
312/850-7255

Midwestern University - C, M
Physician Assistant Program
555 31st Street
Downers Grove, IL 60515
800/458-6253

Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Sciences - M
3333 Green Bay Road
North Chicago, IL 60064-3095
847/578-3312

Southern Illinois University - C, B
Physician Assistant Program
Lindgren Hall, Room 129, MC 6516
Carbondale, IL 62901-6516
618/453-5527

INDIANA

Butler University/Clarian Health - M
Physician Assistant Program
College of Pharmacy
4600 Sunset Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46208
317/940-9969

University of Saint Francis - M
Physician Assistant Program
2701 Spring Street
Fort Wayne, IN 46808
260/434-7737 or 800/729-4732

IOWA

Des Moines University - C, M
Physician Assistant Program
3200 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50312
515/271-7854 or 800/240-2767 x7854

University of Iowa - C, M
Physician Assistant Program
Carver College of Medicine
5167 Westlawn
Iowa City, IA 52242-1100
319/335-8922

KANSAS

Wichita State University - M
Physician Assistant Program
College of Health Professions
1845 N. Fairmont, Box 43
Wichita, KS 67260-0043
316/978-3011

KENTUCKY

University of Kentucky - M
Physician Assistant Program
College of Health Sciences
900 S. Limestone Street, Suite 205
Lexington, KY 40536-0200
859/323-1100

LOUISIANA

Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center - B
Physician Assistant Program
School of Allied Health Professions
1501 Kings Highway, P O Box 33932
Shreveport, LA 71130-3932
318/675-7317, 318/675-7744

Our Lady of the Lake College - M
Physician Associate Program
7443 Picardy Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
225/214-6988

MAINE

The University of New England - C, M
Physician Assistant Program
716 Stevens Avenue
Portland, ME 04103-7688
207/221-4529

MARYLAND

Anne Arundel Community College - C, M Option
Physician Assistant Program
School of Health Professions, Wellness and Physical Education
101 College Parkway
Arnold, MD 21012
410/777-7310

Towson University - CCBC Essex - C, M
Physician Assistant Program
7201 Rossville Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21237
410/780-6159 or 6616

University of Maryland - Eastern Shore - B
Physician Assistant Program
Haze Hall, Room 1034
Princess Anne, MD 21853
410/651-7584

MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences - M
Physician Assistant Program
179 Longwood Avenue, W110
Boston, MA 02115
617/732-2918

Northeastern University - M
Physician Assistant Program
360 Huntington Avenue
202 Robinson Hall
Boston, MA 02115
617/373-3195

Springfield College/Baystate Health System - B, M
Physician Assistant Program
263 Alden Street
Springfield, MA 01109
413/748-3554 or 800/343-1257

MICHIGAN

Central Michigan University - M
Physician Assistant Program
1222 Health Professional Bldg.
Mount Pleasant, MI 48859
989/774-2478 or 1273

Grand Valley State University - M
Physician Assistant Studies Program
301 Michigan Avenue, NE, Ste. 200 CHS
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616/331-3356

University of Detroit Mercy - M
Physician Assistant Program
4001 West McNichols Rd
Detroit, MI 48221
313/993-2474

Wayne State University - M
Dept. of Physician Assistant Studies
259 Mack Avenue, Ste. 2590
Detroit, MI 48202
313/577-1368

Western Michigan University - M
Physician Assistant Program
1903 West Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5138
269/387-5314/5311

MINNESOTA

Augsburg College - C, M
Physician Assistant Program
2211 Riverside Avenue
Campus Box 149
Minneapolis, MN 55454
612/330-1399

MISSOURI

Missouri State University - M
Dept. of Physician Assistant Studies
901 South National Avenue
Springfield, MO 65997
417/836-6151

Saint Louis University - M
Doisy College of Health Sciences
Physician Assistant Program
3437 Caroline Street
St. Louis, MO 63104-1111
314/977-8521

MONTANA

Rocky Mountain College - M
Physician Assistant Program
1511 Poly Drive
Billings, MT 59102-1739
406/657-1190

NEBRASKA

Union College - C, M
Physician Assistant Program
3800 South 48th Street
Lincoln, NE 68506
402/486-2527 (Program)
800/228-4600 (Admissions)

University of Nebraska
Medical Center - M
Physician Assistant Program
984300 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE 68198-4300
402/559-9495

NEVADA

Touro University-Nevada - M
College of Osteopathic Medicine
Physician Assistant Studies Program
874 American Pacific Drive
Henderson, NV 89014
702/777-1770

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences-Manchester - M
Physician Assistant Program
1260 Elm Street
Manchester, NH 03101
603/314-1730

NEW JERSEY

Seton Hall University - M
Physician Assistant Program
400 South Orange Avenue
South Orange, NJ 07079-2689
973/275-2596

University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey - B, M

Physician Assistant Program
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
675 Hoes Lane
Piscataway, NJ 08854-5635
732/235-4445

NEW MEXICO

The University of New Mexico School of Medicine - C, B
Physician Assistant Program
Department of Family & Community Medicine
MSC 09 5040, 1 University of NM
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001
505/272-9678

University of St. Francis - M
Physician Assistant Studies Program
4401 Silver Avenue SE, Suite B
Albuquerque, NM 87108
888/446-4657 or 505/266-5565

NEW YORK

Albany Medical College - M
Physician Assistant Program
Center for Physician Assistant Studies
47 New Scotland Avenue, Mail Code 4
Albany, NY 12208
518/262-5251

The Brooklyn Hospital Center/Long Island University - C, B
Physician Assistant Program
121 DeKalb Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11201
718/260-2780 or 718/488-1011

CCNY/The Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education
PA Program at Harlem Hospital Center - C, B
138th Street & Covent Avenue
Harris Hall, Suite 15
New York, NY 10037
212/650-7745

CUNY York College - B
Physician Assistant Program
94-20 Guy R. Brewer Blvd, Room 112 SC
Jamaica, NY 1145
718/262-2823

D'Youville College - B, M
Physician Assistant Program
320 Porter Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14201
716/829-7713

Daemen College - B, M
Physician Assistant Program
4380 Main Street
Amherst, NY 14226-3592
716/839-8563
800/462-7652 (NY, NJ & PA only)

Hofstra University - C, B
Physician Assistant Studies Program
113 Monroe Lecture Center
127 Hofstra University
Hempstead, NY 11549
516/463-4074

LeMoyne College - M
Physician Assistant Program
Department of Physician Assistant Studies
1419 Salt Springs Road
Syracuse, NY 13214-1399
315/445-4745

Mercy College - B, M
Graduate Program in Physician Assistant Studies
1200 Waters Place
Bronx, NY 10461
914/674-7635

New York Institute of Technology - M
Physician Assistant Program
Riland Building, Suite 352
Northern Blvd, PO Box 8000
Old Westbury, NY 11568-8000
516/686-3881

Pace University/Lenox Hill Hospital - C, B
Physician Assistant Program
One Pace Plaza, Room Y-31
New York, New York 10038
212/346-1357

Rochester Institute of Technology - B
Physician Assistant Program
85 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, NY 14623-5603
716/475-2978

St. Vincent Catholic Medical Centers of New York - C, B
Brooklyn and Queens Region
Physician Assistant Program
175-05 Horace Harding Expressway
Fresh Meadows, NY 11365
718/357-0500

State University of New York Downstate Medical Center - B
Physician Assistant Program
450 Clarkson Avenue - Box 1222
Brooklyn, NY 11203
718/270-2324/5

Stony Brook University - SUNY - M
Physician Assistant Program
School of Health Technology & Management
HSC L2-052
Stony Brook, NY 11794-8202
631/444-3190

Touro College - B
Physician Assistant Program
School of Health Sciences
1700 Union Blvd
Bay Shore, NY 11706
631/665-1600

Touro College - B
Physician Assistant Program
Manhattan Campus
School of Health Sciences
27-33 West 23rd Street
New York, NY 10010
212/463-0400 ext. 792

Wagner College/ Staten Island University Hospital - B, M
Physician Assistant Program
1034 Targee Street, Spring Bldg, 2nd Floor
Staten Island, NY 10304
718/390-4615

Weill Cornell Medical School - C
Physician Assistant Program
A Surgical Focus
575 Lexington Avenue, Suite 600
New York, NY 10022
646/962-7277

NORTH CAROLINA

Duke University Medical Center - C, M
Physician Assistant Program
DUMC 3848
Durham, NC 27710
919/681-3161

East Carolina University - M
School of Allied Health Sciences
Dept. of Physician Assistant Studies
Health Sciences Building, Suite 4310
Greenville, NC 27858-4353
252/744-1100

Methodist University - M
Physician Assistant Program
5107B College Centre Drive
Fayetteville, NC 28311
910/630-7495

Wake Forest University - M
Physician Assistant Program
School of Medicine
Medical Center Boulevard
Winston-Salem, NC 27157-1006
336/716-4356

NORTH DAKOTA

University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences - M
Physician Assistant Program
501 North Columbia Road
Stop 9037
Grand Forks, ND 58202-9037
701/777-2344

OHIO

Cuyahoga Community College - C, M
Physician Assistant Program
11000 Pleasant Valley Road
Parma, OH 44130
216/987-5363

Kettering College of Medical Arts - M
Physician Assistant Program
3737 Southern Boulevard
Kettering, OH 45429
937/296-7238

Marietta College - M
Physician Assistant Program
215 Fifth Street
Marietta, OH 45750
740/376-4458

The University of Findlay - B
Physician Assistant Program
1000 North Main Street
Findlay, OH 45840-3695
419/434-4529 or 800/472-9502

The University of Toledo Health Sciences Campus - M
Physician Assistant Program
3015 Arlington Avenue
Toledo, OH 43614-5803
419/383-5408 or 419/383-4160

OKLAHOMA

**University of Oklahoma - M
Physician Associate Program**
Health Sciences Center
PO Box 26901
Oklahoma City, OK 73190
405/271-2058

**University of Oklahoma - Tulsa - M
Physician Assistant Program**
4502 E. 41st Street
Tulsa, OK 74135-2512
918/619-4760

OREGON

**Oregon Health Sciences University - M
Physician Assistant Program**
3181 SW Sam Jackson Park Road
GH219
Portland, OR 97201-3098
503/494-1484

**Pacific University - C, M
Physician Assistant Program
School of Physician Assistant Studies**
2043 College Way
Forest Grove, OR 97116
503/352-2900

PENNSYLVANIA

**Arcadia University - M
Physician Assistant Program**
Brubaker Hall, Health Science Ctr.
450 South Easton Road
Glenside, PA 19038
215/572-2082

**Chatham College - M
Physician Assistant Program**
Woodland Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15232
412/365-1412

**DeSales University - M
Physician Assistant Program**
2755 Station Avenue
Center Valley, PA 18034-9568
610/282-1100 ext. 1415

**Drexel University Hahnemann - M
Physician Assistant Program**
College of Nursing & Health Professions
1505 Race Street, 8th Floor, MS 504
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1192
215/762-7135

**Duquesne University - M
Dept. of Physician Assistant**
John G. Rangos, Sr., School of Health Sciences
406 Health Sciences Building
Pittsburgh, PA 15282
800/456-0590 or 412/396-5914

**Gannon University - M
Physician Assistant Program**
109 University Square
Erie, PA 16541-0001
814/871-7474

**King's College - M
Physician Assistant Program**
133 North River Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711
570/208-5853

**Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania
C, M
Physician Assistant Program**
Lock Haven, PA 17745
570/893-2541

**Marywood University - M
Physician Assistant Program**
2300 Adams Avenue
Scranton, PA 18509
570/348-6298

**Pennsylvania College of Optometry - M
Physician Assistant Program**
8360 Old York Road
Elkins Park, PA 19027
215/780-1515

**Pennsylvania College of Technology -
B, M option
Physician Assistant Program**
One College Avenue, DIF #123
Williamsport, PA 17701-5799
570/327-4779 or 800/367-9222

**Philadelphia College of Osteopathic
Medicine - C, M
Dept. of Physician Assistant Studies**
4190 City Avenue
Rowland Hall, Suite 005
Philadelphia, PA 19131
215/871-6772

**Philadelphia University - M
Physician Assistant Program**
School House Lane & Henry Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144
215/951-2908

**Saint Francis University - M
Physician Assistant Program
Dept. of Physician Assistant Studies**
PO Box 600
Loretto, PA 15940-0600
814/472-3020

**Seton Hill University - B, M
Physician Assistant Program**
Seton Hill Drive
Greensburg, PA 15601
724/838-4283

SOUTH CAROLINA

**Medical University of
South Carolina - M
Physician Assistant Program**
165 Cannon Street, Suite 403
P O Box 250856
Charleston, SC 29425
843/792-0376

SOUTH DAKOTA

**University of South Dakota - M
Physician Assistant Studies**
School of Medicine
414 East Clark Street, Julian #205
Vermillion, SD 57069-2390
605/677-5128

TENNESSEE

**Trevecca Nazarene University - M
Physician Assistant Program**
333 Murfreesboro Road
Nashville, TN 37210-2877
615/248-1225

**South College - M
Master of Health Science
Physician Assistant Program**
3904 Lonas Drive
Knoxville, TN 37909
865/251-1800

TEXAS

**Baylor College of Medicine - C, M
Physician Assistant Program**
One Baylor Plaza, Room 107 BTXX
Houston, TX 77030-3498
713/798-4842

**Texas Tech Univ. Health Sciences Center - M
Physician Assistant Program**
School of Allied Health
Dept. of Laboratory Sciences & Primary Care
3600 North Garfield
Midland, TX 79705
432/620-9905 or 806/743-3220

**University of North Texas Health Science
Center at Fort Worth - M
Physician Assistant Studies**
3500 Camp Bowie Blvd
Fort Worth, TX 76107-2699
817/735-2301

**The University of Texas Health
Science Center at San Antonio - M
Dept. of Physician Assistant Studies**
7703 Floyd Curl Drive, MC 6249
San Antonio, TX 78229-3900
210/567-8811

**The University of Texas
Medical Branch - M
Physician Assistant Program**
School of Allied Health Services
301 University Blvd
Galveston, TX 77555-1145
409/772-3046

**The University of Texas Pan American - B
Physician Assistant Program**
1201 W University Drive
Edinburg, TX 78539
956/381-2292

**University of Texas Southwestern
Medical Center at Dallas - M
Physician Assistant Program**
6011 Harry Hines Boulevard
Dallas, TX 75390-9090
214/648-1701

UTAH

**University of Utah - C, M
Physician Assistant Program**
375 Chipeta Way, Suite A
Salt Lake City, UT 84108
801/581-7766

VIRGINIA

**Eastern Virginia Medical School - M
Physician Assistant Program**
700 W Olney Road, P O Box 1980
Norfolk, VA 23501-1980
757/446-7158

**James Madison University - M
Physician Assistant Program**
Department of Health Sciences
MSC 4301
Harrisonburg, VA 22807
540/568-2395

**Jefferson College of Health Sciences - B
Physician Assistant Program**
920 S Jefferson Street, PO Box 13186
Roanoke, VA 24016-3186
540/985-4016

**Shenandoah University - M
Division of Physician Assistant Studies**
1460 University Drive
Winchester, VA 22601
540/542-6208

WASHINGTON

**University of Washington -
C, B optional, M
MEDEX Northwest
Physician Assistant Program**
4311 11th Avenue NE, Suite 200
Seattle, WA 98105-4608
206/616-4001

WEST VIRGINIA

**Alderson Broaddus College - M
Physician Assistant Program**
Box 2036
Philippi, WV 26416
304/457-6283 or 304/457-6290

**Mountain State University -
B optional, M
Physician Assistant Program**
PO Box 9003
609 South Kanawha Street
Beckley, WV 25802-9003
800/766-6067 ext. 1598

WISCONSIN

**Marquette University - M
Physician Assistant Program**
College of Health Sciences
1700 Building
PO Box 1881
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881
414/288-5688

**University of Wisconsin - LaCrosse-
Gundersen Lutheran Medical Foundation -
C, M
Physician Assistant Program
Mayo School of Health Related Sciences**
4031 Health Science Center
1725 State Street
LaCrosse, WI 54601-3788
608/785-6622 608/785-8470

**University of Wisconsin - Madison - B, M optional
Physician Assistant Program**
1278 Health Science Learning Center
750 Highland Avenue
Madison, WI 53705
608/263-5620 800/442-6698

Uniformed Services

**Interservice Physician Assistant
Program - C, B, M**
Academy of Health Sciences
Attn: MCCSHMP
3151 Scott Road, Suite 1202
Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234-6138
210-221-8004

**Note: Applicants to the Interservice PA
Program must be active duty U.S. Air Force,
U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U. S. Coast Guard,
Army National Guard, or Federal Bureau of
Prisons employee.**

Credentials Awarded:
**C - Certificate of Completion
A - Associate's Degree
B - Bachelor's Degree
M - Master's Degree**

Appendix B

- The Center's physician assistant survey

SURVEY

*Please return this survey by Wednesday May 14, 2008.
FAX to (606) 435-0392 or mail in the enclosed
postage-paid envelope.*

1. How many physician assistants are currently employed at your facility? _____

1a. If the answer to question number one is zero, please choose one of the following to help us better understand your needs:

- ___ My facility is having difficulty recruiting a physician assistant.
- ___ The number of patient visits/census at my facility is not large enough to support a physician assistant.
- ___ My facility prefers hiring nurse practitioners.
- ___ Other: _____.

2. How many physician assistants does your facility anticipate hiring on a full-time basis within the next three to five years? _____

2a. Any on a part-time basis? If so, how many? _____

3. On the following scale, please rank the difficulty level for recruiting physician assistants in your service area.

Not Difficult		Moderately Difficult		Very Difficult
1	2	3	4	5

4. Any additional comments are welcome

_____.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix C

- Information about PAs and the PA profession

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[About AAPA & PAs](#) [CME](#) [Professional Issues](#) [Clinical Issues](#) [PA Licensing](#) [Employment](#) [Membership](#) [Members Only](#)

Information About PAs and the PA Profession

[\[General Information\]](#) [\[PA Education\]](#) [\[Scope of Practice\]](#) [\[Physicians and PAs\]](#) [\[AMA Guidelines\]](#) [\[PA Organizations\]](#)

General Information

Q. What is a Physician Assistant (PA)?

A. Physician assistants are health care professionals licensed, or in the case of those employed by the federal government they are credentialed, to practice medicine with physician supervision. As part of their comprehensive responsibilities, PAs conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery, and write prescriptions. Within the physician-PA relationship, physician assistants exercise autonomy in medical decision making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services. A PA's practice may also include education, research, and administrative services.

PAs are trained in intensive education [programs](#) accredited by the [Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant \(ARC-PA\)](#).

Because of the close working relationship the PAs have with physicians, PAs are educated in the medical model designed to complement physician training. Upon graduation, physician assistants take a national certification examination developed by the National Commission on Certification of PAs in conjunction with the National Board of Medical Examiners. To maintain their national certification, PAs must log 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years and sit for a recertification every six years. Graduation from an accredited physician assistant program and passage of the national certifying exam are required for state licensure.

Q. How did the Physician Assistant profession begin?

A. In the mid-1960s, physicians and educators recognized there was a shortage and uneven distribution of primary care physicians. To expand the delivery of quality medical care, Dr. Eugene Stead of the Duke University Medical Center in North Carolina put together the first class of PAs in 1965. He selected Navy corpsmen who received considerable medical training during their military service and during the war in Vietnam but who had no comparable civilian employment. He based the curriculum of the PA program in part on his knowledge of the fast-track training of doctors during World War II.

For more information about the history of the PA profession, visit the [PA History Center Web page](#).

Q. What does "PA-C" stand for? What does the "C" mean?

A. Physician assistant-certified. It means that the person who holds the title has met the defined course of study and has undergone testing by the [National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants \(NCCPA\)](#). The NCCPA is an independent organization, and the commissioners represent a number of different medical professions as well as PAs. The NCCPA is not a part of the PA professional organization, the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA). To maintain that "C" after "PA", a physician assistant must log 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years and take the recertification exam every six years.

PA Education

Q. How is a Physician Assistant educated?

A. Physician assistants are educated in intensive medical programs accredited by the [Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant \(ARC-PA\)](#). The average PA program curriculum runs approximately 26 months. There are approximately 140 accredited [programs](#). All PA programs must meet the same ARC-PA [standards](#).

Because of the close working relationship PAs have with physicians, PAs are [educated in a medical model](#) designed to complement physician training. PA students are taught, as are medical students, to diagnose and treat medical problems.

Education consists of classroom and laboratory instruction in the basic medical and behavioral sciences (such as anatomy, pharmacology, pathophysiology, clinical medicine, and physical diagnosis), followed by clinical rotations in internal medicine, family medicine, surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine, and geriatric medicine.

A PA's education doesn't stop after graduation, though. PAs are required to take ongoing continuing medical education classes and be retested on their clinical skills on a regular basis. A number of postgraduate PA programs have also been established to provide practicing PAs with advanced education in medical specialties.

Q. What are the prerequisites for applying to a PA program?

A. PA programs look for students who have a desire to study, work hard, and to be of service to their community. Most physician assistant programs require applicants to have previous health care experience and some college education. The typical applicant already has a bachelor's degree and approximately four years of health care experience. Commonly nurses, EMTs, and paramedics apply to PA programs. Check with PA educational [programs](#) of interest to you for a list of their prerequisites.

Scope of Practice

Q. What areas of medicine can Physician Assistants work in?

A. Physician assistants are found in all areas of medicine. They practice in the areas of primary care medicine - that is family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, and obstetrics and gynecology -- as well in surgery and the surgical subspecialties.

Physician assistants receive a broad education in medicine. Their education is ongoing after graduation through continuing medical education requirements and continual interaction with physicians and other health care providers.

Q. Where do PAs "draw the line" as far as what they can treat and what a physician can treat?

A. What a physician assistant does varies with training, experience, and state law. In addition, the scope of the PA's responsibilities corresponds to the supervising physician's practice. In general, a physician assistant will see many of the same types of patients as the physician. The cases handled by physicians are generally the more complicated medical cases or those cases which require care that is not a routine part of the PA's scope of work. Referral to the physician, or close consultation between the patient-PA-physician, is done for unusual or hard to manage cases. Physician assistants are taught to "know our limits" and refer to physicians appropriately. It is an important part of PA education.

Q. Can PAs prescribe medications?

A. All fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Guam have enacted [laws that authorize PA prescribing](#). In California, PA prescriptions are referred to as written prescription transmittal orders.

Physicians and PAs

Q. What do physicians think about Physician Assistants?

A. Most physicians who have worked with physician assistants like having PAs on staff. The American Medical Association, the American College of Surgeons, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Physicians, and other national medical organizations support the physician assistant profession by actively supporting the PA certifying commission and the PA program accrediting agency.

Studies done by the Federal Government have shown that PAs, working with the supervision of physicians, provide care that is comparable to physician care. The Eighth Report to the President and Congress on the Status of Health Personnel in the United States (released in 1992) states, "Physician assistants have demonstrated their clinical effectiveness both in terms of quality of care and patient acceptance."

Q. What is the working relationship between a physician and a physician assistant?

A. The relationship between a PA and the supervising physician is one of mutual trust and respect. The physician assistant is a representative of the physician, treating the patient in the style and manner developed and directed by the supervising physician. The physician and PA practice as [members of a medical team](#). In 1995, the American Medical Association developed suggested guidelines for how physicians and PAs should work as a team in the delivery of medical care.

**Suggested Guidelines for Physician-Physician Assistant Practice
Adopted by the AMA House of Delegates, June 1995**

Reflecting the comments from the American Academy of Physician Assistants, separate model guidelines for Physician/Physician Assistants practice have been developed. These are based on the unique relationship of Physician Assistants who recognize themselves as agents of physicians with respect to delegated medical acts, and legal responsibilities. They are consistent with the existing AMA policies concerning Physician Assistants cited in this report. In all settings, Physician Assistants recognize physician supervision in the delivery of patient care. The suggested guidelines reflect those as follows:

1. Health care services delivered by physicians and Physician Assistants must be within the scope of each practitioners authorized practice as defined by state law.
2. The physician is ultimately responsible for coordinating and managing the care of patients and, with the appropriate input of the Physician Assistant, ensuring the quality of health care provided to patients.
3. The physician is responsible for the supervision of the Physician Assistant in all settings.
4. The role of the Physician Assistant(s) in the delivery of care should be defined through mutually agreed upon guidelines that are developed by the physician and the Physician Assistant and based on the physician's delegatory style.
5. The physician must be available for consultation with the Physician Assistant at all times either in person or through telecommunication systems or other means.
6. The extent of the involvement by the Physician Assistant in the assessment and implementation of treatment will depend on the complexity and acuity of the patient's condition and the training and experience and preparation of the Physician Assistant as adjudged by the physician.
7. Patients should be made clearly aware at all times whether they are being cared for by a physician or a Physician Assistant.
8. The physician and Physician Assistant together should review all delegated patient services on a regular basis, as well as the mutually agreed upon guidelines for practice.
9. The physician is responsible for clarifying and familiarizing the Physician Assistant with his supervising methods and style of delegating patient care.

Q. What's the difference between a PA and a physician?

A. Physician assistants are educated in the medical model; in some schools they attend many of the same classes as medical students.

One of the main differences between PA education and physician education is not the core content of the curriculum, but the amount of time spent in formal education. In addition to time in school, physicians are required to do an internship, and the majority also complete a residency in a specialty following that. PAs do not have to undertake an internship or residency.

A physician has complete responsibility for the care of the patient. PAs share that responsibility with the supervising physicians.

PA Organizations

Q. What is the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)?

A. The [AAPA](#) is the only national professional society to represent all physician assistants in every area of medicine. Founded in 1968, the academy has a federated structure of [57 chartered chapters](#) representing PAs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the federal services.

AAPA's mission is to provide quality, cost-effective, and accessible health care as well as to support the professional and personal development of PAs. The AAPA pursues these goals through [government relations](#) and [public education](#) programs, [research and data collection](#) efforts, and [continuing education](#) activities.

The Academy's policies are set by the House of Delegates, which meets once a year, and implemented by the [Board of Directors](#). The House of Delegates is made up of representatives from the chartered chapters, specialty organizations, the Student Academy, and the Physician Assistant Education Association. Member projects and activities are assisted by the [AAPA staff](#). A [calendar](#) of upcoming AAPA events is available on this Web site.

Q. What is the Physician Assistant Foundation?

A. As the philanthropic arm of the American Academy of Physician Assistants, the Physician Assistant Foundation's mission is to foster education and research that enhance the delivery of quality health care. Related to this mission are the Foundation's goals to increase the understanding of the physician assistant profession and to develop and promote philanthropic activities. Learn more about the [PA Foundation](#) on this Web site.

Q. What is the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA)?

A. PAEA is a national organization whose members are the PA programs and individual PA educators. It includes representation from accredited programs and programs going through the accreditation process.

To locate additional information about AAPA and the PA profession, use the Site Search feature at the top of this page. We welcome your comments and suggestions. E-mail us at aapa@aapa.org

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American Academy of Physician Assistants
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Alexandria, Virginia
22314-1552
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E-mail: aapa@aapa.org