



Information Update

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Projected Number of People in Clinical Practice as PAs as of January 1, 2004

Overview

AAPA estimates there will be approximately 50,121 people in clinical practice as PAs at the beginning of 2004. (See Table 1.) New York and California are projected to have the largest numbers of practicing PAs, and Mississippi and Arkansas are projected to have the smallest number. (See Table 2.) The methodology used to estimate the total number of people in clinical practice as PAs and to project their distribution by state is discussed below.

Methodology

The overall estimate of the number of people in clinical practice as PAs was produced by summing estimates produced for the following four groups:

1. People who were eligible to practice clinically as PAs prior to 2003 and AAPA Fellow Members in 2003 (Fellow Members)
2. People who were eligible to practice clinically as PAs prior to 2003 but not AAPA Fellow Members in 2003 (Potential Fellow Members)
3. People who were eligible to practice clinically as PAs prior to 2003 but not AAPA Fellow Members in 2003, were not known to have been certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants or licensed as a PA by a state, and had no valid address information in the AAPA Masterfile on October 13, 2003 (PAs Lost to Contact)
4. People who graduated or were expected to graduate from a PA program in 2003 (New Graduates).

Our rationale for treating the four groups separately is

- We have different levels of information about them
- We have found that at least the three groups that can be surveyed are distributed differently with respect to clinical practice status and other characteristics.

The number of PAs within each group was determined from the AAPA Masterfile on October 13, 2003. The exact counts at that time were 28,616 Fellow Members, 26,181 Potential Fellow Members, 2,908 PAs Lost to Contact, and 4,415 New Graduates. To project the proportion of each group that would be practicing as PAs at the beginning of 2004, we used the following methods.

Fellow Members: This estimate was derived through a direct application of the results of the 2003 AAPA Physician Assistant Census Survey, which found that 93.8 percent of all AAPA Fellow Members in 2003 who graduated prior to 2003 were in clinical practice on a full- or part-time basis.

Potential Fellow Members: This estimate was also generated by applying the results of the 2003 AAPA Physician Assistant Census Survey, which found that 73.8 percent of the PAs who graduated prior to 2003 but were not Fellow Members in 2003 were in clinical practice on a full- or part-time basis.

PAs Lost to Contact: No solid basis exists for estimating the percentage of this group that would be in practice in January 1, 2004, since they cannot be contacted. Moreover, since none of the people in this group were known to have ever been certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants or licensed as a PA by a state, we chose to be conservative and estimated that none of them would be in clinical practice in January 1, 2004.

New Graduates: We estimated the practice status distribution of the people who graduated or were expected to graduate from a PA program in 2003 by using data about the 2002 graduates. We have no information by which to estimate the practice distribution of 2003 graduates directly because those who graduate in the census survey reference year are not invited to participate in the survey.

Our specific procedures for estimating the practice status distribution of new graduates involved calculating a weighted average for the following three groups:

- 2002 graduates who were AAPA Fellow Members in 2003
- 2002 graduates who were not Fellow Members in 2003
- 2002 graduates who were lost to contact.

This average equaled 89.9 percent.

State Allocation: Our projections of the number of PAs in practice in each state as of January 1, 2004, were also produced by summing the separate estimates for Fellow Members, Potential Fellow Members, and New Graduates. For Fellow Members, we simply applied the percentage of each state's Fellow Members who were in clinical practice according to the 2003 AAPA Physician Assistant Census Survey, to the total number of Fellow Members within the state. It should be noted that the total number of Fellow Members within each state was determined from the AAPA Masterfile on October 13, 2003. The Masterfile contains valid work and/or home state information for these PAs. When possible, we associated the PA with his/her work state. When work state was not available, we used home state.

We used the same method to estimate the number of Potential Fellow Members who would be in practice in each state. Specifically, we applied the percentage of each state's Potential Fellow Members who were in clinical practice (according to the 2003 AAPA Physician Assistant Census) to the total number of Potential Fellow Members within the state (according to the AAPA Masterfile on October 13, 2003).

To estimate the number of New Graduates in clinical practice in each state, we partitioned the total estimate of New Graduates in practice for the nation according to the state allocation of the PAs who graduated in 2002.

Our rationale for not using the New Graduates’ own address information was that

- No address information was available in the AAPA Masterfile on October 13, 2003 for some
- Many of the addresses that were available identified the states in which the New Graduates were going to school or called “home” rather than the states in which they ultimately would work after graduation.

Findings

In summing the estimates for the groups, we project there will be 50,121 people practicing clinically as PAs on January 1, 2004. (See Table 1.)

The numbers of people that we project will be practicing as PAs in each state on January 1, 2004, vary greatly, ranging from 65 to 5,944. Similarly, the numbers of practicing PAs per capita by state vary greatly, ranging from 23 to 432 per million population. (See Table 2.) Nevertheless, it is generally true that the states with larger populations have larger numbers of people practicing as PAs and that the per capita rankings of the states have been relatively stable over time.

Conclusions

The number of people in clinical practice as PAs, which we estimate will be 50,121 at the beginning of 2004, is almost certain to grow. The proportion of people who are eligible to practice as PAs that are in clinical practice remains very high, at 80.8 percent.

Table 1. Estimated Number of Practicing PAs as of January 1, 2004

	Count	% Practicing	# Practicing
AAPA Fellow Members in 2003	28,616	93.8% (a)	26,840
Potential AAPA Fellow Members	26,181	73.8% (a)	19,313
PAs Lost to Contact	2,908	0.0% (b)	0
New Graduates in 2003	4,415	89.9% (c)	3,968
Total People Eligible to Practice as PAs	62,039	80.8%	50,121

(a) Percent in practice based on 2003 AAPA Census Survey data.

(b) Percent in practice assumed to be zero.

(c) Percent in practice based on data for those who became eligible to practice as a PA in 2002.

Table 2. Projected Distribution of Practicing PAs by State as of January 1, 2004

State	Number of PAs Practicing as of 1/1/2004	State Population (in 1000's)	PAs per Million Pop (b)	Per Capita Ranking 2004 (c)	Per Capita Ranking 2003 (c)	Per Capita Ranking 2002 (c)	Per Capita Ranking 2001 (c)	Per Capita Ranking 2000 (c)
Alabama	294	4,487	66	48	49	47	46	46
Alaska	278	644	432	1	1	1	1	1
Arizona	1,010	5,456	185	28	28	28	28	28
Arkansas	65	2,710	24	50	50	50	50	50
California	4,873	35,116	139	37	36	36	37	36
Colorado	1,181	4,507	262	14	12	11	12	14
Connecticut	981	3,461	284	9	11	12	10	10
Delaware	147	807	183	29	29	35	34	34
District of Columbia	190	571	333	5	4	3	2	5
Florida	2,771	16,713	166	32	30	30	30	30
Georgia	1,615	8,560	189	27	24	25	23	22
Hawaii	114	1,245	91	44	44	43	43	43
Idaho	309	1,341	231	17	18	19	24	26
Illinois	1,273	12,601	101	43	43	44	44	44
Indiana	390	6,159	63	49	47	49	49	49
Iowa	586	2,937	200	24	26	22	22	18
Kansas	592	2,716	218	20	19	24	21	19
Kentucky	588	4,093	144	34	34	29	31	33
Louisiana	354	4,483	79	46	46	45	45	45
Maine	438	1,294	339	4	3	4	5	3
Maryland	1,368	5,458	251	15	14	13	13	12
Massachusetts	1,108	6,428	172	31	31	31	29	29
Michigan	2,082	10,050	207	23	22	23	25	23
Minnesota	727	5,020	145	33	33	33	36	35
Mississippi	65	2,872	23	51	51	51	51	51
Missouri	408	5,673	72	47	48	48	48	48
Montana	242	909	266	12	15	14	15	17
Nebraska	552	1,729	319	6	5	5	7	7
Nevada	276	2,173	127	38	38	38	35	37
New Hampshire	283	1,275	222	19	20	21	19	24
New Jersey	751	8,590	87	45	45	46	47	47
New Mexico	398	1,855	215	21	21	17	17	15
New York	5,944	19,158	310	7	8	8	8	8
North Carolina	2,429	8,320	292	8	7	9	6	6
North Dakota	218	634	343	3	6	6	4	4
Ohio	1,365	11,421	120	40	39	39	39	39
Oklahoma	724	3,494	207	22	23	20	20	21
Oregon	502	3,522	143	35	37	37	38	38
Pennsylvania	2,873	12,335	233	16	17	18	18	20
Rhode Island	184	1,070	172	30	32	32	32	31
South Carolina	447	4,107	109	41	42	42	42	42
South Dakota	309	761	407	2	2	2	3	2
Tennessee	614	5,797	106	42	41	41	41	41
Texas	3,058	21,780	140	36	35	34	33	32
Utah	458	2,316	198	25	25	26	27	25
Vermont	171	617	278	10	13	15	14	11
Virginia	914	7,294	125	39	40	40	40	40
Washington	1,369	6,069	226	18	16	16	16	16
West Virginia	485	1,802	269	11	9	7	9	9
Wisconsin	1,037	5,441	191	26	27	27	26	27
Wyoming	132	499	265	13	10	10	11	13

- (a) The total number of PAs in clinical practice includes the sum of the practicing PAs in each state plus another 236 PAs who work/reside outside of the US or in unknown locations.
 (b) Estimates of state population in 2002 from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233; Internet release date: December 20, 2002.
 (c) Estimates of state population in 2000 from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233; Internet release date: April 2, 2002.