



Information Update

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Projected Number of People in Clinical Practice as PAs as of January 1, 2006

Overview

AAPA estimates there will be approximately 58,665 people in clinical practice as physician assistants (PAs) at the beginning of 2006. (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 numbers. (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

We produced the overall estimate of the number of people in clinical practice as PAs by summing estimates produced separately for males, females, and those of unknown sex within each of the following four general groups:

1. Those who were eligible to practice clinically as PAs prior to 2005 and were AAPA Fellow Members in 2005 (Fellow Members)
2. Those who were eligible to practice clinically as PAs prior to 2005 but were not AAPA Fellow Members in 2005 (Potential Fellow Members)
3. Those who were eligible to practice clinically as PAs prior to 2005 but were not AAPA Fellow Members in 2005, were not known to have been certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, were not licensed as a PA by a state, and had no valid address information in the AAPA Masterfile on November 1, 2005 (PAs Lost to Contact)
4. Those who graduated or were expected to graduate from a PA program in 2005 (New Graduates)

Our rationale for addressing the four general 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.

We considered males, females, and those of unknown sex separately, because they are not uniformly distributed among the four general groups and have notably different distributions regarding clinical practice status.

The number of PAs within each group was determined from the AAPA Masterfile on November 1, 2005. Table 1 presents the number of males, females, and those of unknown sex that were Fellow Members, Potential Fellow Members, PAs Lost to Contact, and New Graduates. To project the proportion of each group that would be practicing as PAs at the beginning of 2006, we used the following methods.

For Fellow Members and Potential Fellow Members of each sex, we derived the estimates through a direct application of the results of the 2005 AAPA Physician Assistant Census Survey. For example, we applied the percentage of male AAPA Fellow Members who reported on the Census survey that they were in clinical practice to the total number of male AAPA Fellow Members in 2005 who graduated prior to 2005 to estimate the total number of male PAs within this group who were in clinical practice on a full- or part-time basis at some time during 2005.

No solid basis exists for estimating the percentage of the PAs Lost to Contact that would be in practice in January 1, 2006, 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 estimated that none of them would be in clinical practice in January 1, 2006.

We estimated the practice status distribution of the people who graduated or were expected to graduate from a PA program in 2005 (i.e., New Graduates) by using data about the 2004 graduates. We have no information by which to estimate the practice distribution of 2005 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 distributions of male, female, and unknown sex new graduates involved calculating a weighted average of the following for each:

- 2004 graduates who were AAPA Fellow Members in 2005
- 2004 graduates who were not Fellow Members in 2005

State Allocation

Our projections of the number of PAs in practice in each state as of January 1, 2006, were also produced by summing the separate estimates for males, females, and those of unknown sex within the groups of Fellow Members, Potential Fellow Members, and New Graduates. For Fellow Members of each sex, we applied the percentage of each state's Fellow Members of each sex who were in clinical practice according to the 2005 AAPA Physician Assistant Census Survey, to the total number of Fellow Members of each sex within the state. It should be noted that the total number of Fellow Members of each sex within each state was determined from work state data collected on the 2005 AAPA Physician Assistant Census Survey when available, and otherwise the preferred mailing state noted in the AAPA Masterfile on November 1, 2005.

We used the same method to estimate the number of Potential Fellow Members of each sex who would be in practice in each state. Specifically, we applied the percentage of each state's Potential Fellow Members of each sex who were in clinical practice (according to the 2005 AAPA Physician Assistant Census) to the total number of Potential Fellow Members of each sex within the state.

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 observed for the PAs who graduated in 2004.

Our rationale for not using the New Graduates' own address information was:

- No address information was available in the AAPA Masterfile on November 1, 2005, for some;
- Many of the addresses that were available identified the states in which the New Graduates were going to school.

Findings

In summing the estimates for males, females, and those of unknown sex within the four general groups, we project there will be 58,665 people practicing clinically as PAs on January 1, 2006. (See Table 1.)

The numbers of people that we project will be practicing as PAs in each state on January 1, 2006, vary greatly, ranging from 73 to 6,610. Similarly, the numbers of practicing PAs per capita by state vary greatly, ranging from 25 to 478 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. Four states did experience a change in more than five positions in the rankings. Arizona, Delaware, and West Virginia advanced by 6, 6, and 7 positions respectively; the District of Columbia fell by 9 positions.

Conclusions

The number of people in clinical practice as PAs, which we estimate will be 58,665 at the beginning of 2006, 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 83 percent.

Table 1. Estimated Number of Practicing PAs as of January 1, 2006

		Number	Number In Practice	Percent in Practice
AAPA Fellow Members in 2005 (a)	Male	11985	11459	95.61%
	Female	17882	16656	93.14%
	Unknown	155	139	89.68%
	Total	30022	28254	94.11%
Potential AAPA Fellow Members (a)	Male	14429	12161	84.28%
	Female	17884	13786	77.09%
	Unknown	699	575	82.26%
	Total	33012	26522	80.34%
PAs Lost To Contact (b)	Male	1684	0	0.00%
	Female	1482	0	0.00%
	Unknown	137	0	0.00%
	Total	3303	0	0.00%
New Graduates in 2005(c)	Male	1167	1079	92.48%
	Female	2919	2687	92.06%
	Unknown	189	123	65.09%
	Total	4275	3889	90.98%
Total People Eligible To Practice As PAs	Male	29265	24699	84.40%
	Female	40167	33129	82.48%
	Unknown	1180	837	70.93%
	Total	70612	58665	83.08%

(a) Percent in practice based on 2005 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 2004.

Table 2. Projected Distribution of Practicing PAs by State as of January 1, 2006

	Number of PAs Practicing as of 1/1/2006 (a)	State Population in 1000's (b)	PAs per Million Population	Per Capita Ranking 2006	Per Capita Ranking 2005	Per Capita Ranking 2004	Per Capita Ranking 2003	Per Capita Ranking 2002
Alabama	311	4,572	68	49	49	48	49	47
Alaska	329	688	478	1	1	1	1	1
Arizona	1,319	5,835	226	22	28	28	28	28
Arkansas	73	2,786	26	50	50	50	50	50
California	5,790	36,817	157	37	37	37	36	36
Colorado	1,397	4,690	298	14	13	14	12	11
Connecticut	1,140	3,553	321	9	9	9	11	12
Delaware	190	842	226	23	29	29	29	35
District of Columbia	174	563	309	12	3	5	4	3
Florida	3,498	17,619	199	31	31	32	30	30
Georgia	1,883	8,926	211	29	27	27	24	25
Hawaii	149	1,594	94	45	45	44	44	43
Idaho	377	1,413	267	16	16	17	18	19
Illinois	1,463	12,856	114	44	43	43	43	44
Indiana	496	6,307	79	48	48	49	47	49
Iowa	658	2,982	221	25	26	24	26	22
Kansas	640	2,782	230	21	22	20	19	24
Kentucky	694	4,188	166	34	34	34	34	29
Louisiana	410	4,555	90	46	46	46	46	45
Maine	450	1,330	338	5	4	4	3	4
Maryland	1,551	5,646	275	15	14	15	14	13
Massachusetts	1,334	6,504	205	30	30	31	31	31
Michigan	2,501	10,268	244	19	19	23	22	23
Minnesota	918	5,177	177	33	33	33	33	33
Mississippi	74	2,922	25	51	51	51	51	51
Missouri	491	5,831	84	47	47	47	48	48
Montana	296	941	315	11	11	12	15	14
Nebraska	584	1,767	330	7	5	6	5	5
Nevada	373	2,398	156	38	38	38	38	38
New Hampshire	313	1,312	239	20	20	19	20	21
New Jersey	1,028	8,815	117	43	44	45	45	46
New Mexico	428	1,933	221	26	21	21	21	17
New York	6,610	19,527	339	4	7	7	8	8
North Carolina	2,839	8,631	329	8	8	8	7	9
North Dakota	216	641	337	6	6	3	6	6
Ohio	1,617	11,608	139	40	40	40	39	39
Oklahoma	794	3,668	216	27	23	22	23	20
Oregon	603	3,684	164	35	35	35	37	37
Pennsylvania	3,319	12,529	265	17	17	16	17	18
Rhode Island	214	1,097	195	32	32	30	32	32
South Carolina	531	4,236	125	42	41	41	42	42
South Dakota	344	780	441	2	2	2	2	2
Tennessee	780	5,959	131	41	42	42	41	41
Texas	3,660	22,739	161	36	36	36	35	34
Utah	523	2,422	216	28	25	25	25	26
Vermont	199	628	316	10	12	10	13	15
Virginia	1,179	7,583	155	39	39	39	40	40
Washington	1,625	6,398	254	18	18	18	16	16
West Virginia	630	1,831	344	3	10	11	9	7
Wisconsin	1,240	5,568	223	24	24	26	27	27
Wyoming	157	513	307	13	15	13	10	10

- (a) The total number of PAs in clinical practice includes the sum of the practicing PAs in each state plus another 253 PAs who work/reside outside of the US or in unknown locations.
 (b) Estimates of state population from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233; Internet release date: July 2005.