



Information Update

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Projected Number of People in Clinical Practice as PAs as of January 1, 2008

Overview

AAPA estimates there will be approximately 68,124 people in clinical practice as physician assistants (PAs) at the beginning of 2008. (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 PAs whose sex is unknown within each of the following four general groups:

1. Those who were eligible to practice clinically as PAs prior to 2007 and were AAPA Fellow Members in 2007 (Fellow Members)
2. Those who were eligible to practice clinically as PAs prior to 2007 but were not AAPA Fellow Members in 2007 (Potential Fellow Members)
3. Those who were eligible to practice clinically as PAs prior to 2007 but were not AAPA Fellow Members in 2007, 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, 2007 (PAs Lost to Contact)
4. Those who graduated or were expected to graduate from a PA program in 2007 (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 two groups that can be meaningfully surveyed are distributed differently with respect to clinical practice status and other characteristics.

We considered males, females, and those PAs whose sex is unknown as distinct groups because these populations 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, 2007. Table 1 presents the number of males, females, and those PAs whose sex is unknown 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 2008, we used the following methods.

For Fellow Members and Potential Fellow Members, we derived the estimates through a direct application of the results of the 2007 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 2007 who graduated prior to 2007 to estimate the total number of male PAs within this group who were in clinical practice on a full-time or part-time basis at some time during 2007.

No solid basis exists for estimating the percentage of the PAs Lost to Contact that would be in practice in January 1, 2008, 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, 2008.

We estimated the practice status distribution of the people who graduated or were expected to graduate from a PA program in 2007 (i.e., New Graduates) by using data about the 2006 graduates. We have no information by which to estimate the practice distribution of 2007 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 and female 2007 graduates, and 2007 graduates whose sex is unknown, involved calculating a weighted average of the following for each:

- 2006 graduates who were AAPA Fellow Members in 2007
- 2006 graduates who were not AAPA Fellow Members in 2007

State Allocation

Our projections of the number of PAs in practice in each state as of January 1, 2008, were also produced by summing the separate estimates for males, females, and those PAs whose sex is unknown 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 2007 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 2007 AAPA Physician Assistant Census Survey when available, and otherwise the preferred mailing state noted in the AAPA Master file on November 1, 2007.

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 2007 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 2006.

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

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

Findings

In summing the estimates for males, females, and those PAs whose sex is unknown within the four general groups, we project there will be 68,124 people practicing clinically as PAs on January 1, 2008. (See Table 1.) The numbers of people that we project will be practicing as PAs in each state on January 1, 2008, vary greatly, ranging from 79 to 7,359. Similarly, the numbers of practicing PAs per capita by state vary greatly, ranging from 27 to 526 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. The one exception was Georgia, which moved up five positions in the rankings.

Conclusions

The number of people in clinical practice as PAs, which we estimate will be 68,124 at the beginning of 2008, 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 85 percent.

Table 1. Estimated Number of Practicing PAs as of January 1, 2008

		Number	Number In Practice	Percent in Practice
AAPA Fellow Members in 2007 (a)	Male	11,790	11,369	96.43%
	Female	19,742	18,525	93.84%
	Unknown	138	120	86.96%
	Total	31,670	30,014	94.77%
Potential AAPA Fellow Members (a)	Male	16,926	15,090	89.15%
	Female	22,165	18,215	82.18%
	Unknown	868	750	86.41%
	Total	39,959	34,055	85.22%
PAs Lost To Contact (b)	Male	1,815	-	0.00%
	Female	1,639	-	0.00%
	Unknown	158	-	0.00%
	Total	3,612	-	0.00%
New Graduates in 2007(c)	Male	1,177	1,064	90.43%
	Female	3,181	2,917	91.71%
	Unknown	183	73	39.85%
	Total	4,541	4,055	89.29%
Total People Eligible To Practice As PAs (d)	Male	31,672	27,523	86.90%
	Female	46,687	39,657	84.94%
	Unknown	1,347	943	70.00%
	Total	79,706	68,124	85.47%

- (a) Percent in practice based on 2007 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 2006.
 (d) Due to rounding, the total estimates may differ from the sum of the estimates for subgroups.

Table 2. Projected Distribution of Practicing PAs by State as of January 1, 2008

	Number of PAs Practicing as of 1/1/2008 (a)	State Population in 1000's (b)	PAs per Million Population	Per Capita Ranking 2008	Per Capita Ranking 2007	Per Capita Ranking 2006	Per Capita Ranking 2005	Per Capita Ranking 2004
Alabama	433	4,599	94	48	49	49	49	48
Alaska	353	670	526	1	1	1	1	1
Arizona	1,595	6,166	259	23	24	22	28	28
Arkansas	121	2,811	43	50	50	50	50	50
California	6,414	36,458	176	39	38	37	37	37
Colorado	1,625	4,753	342	11	12	14	13	14
Connecticut	1,269	3,505	362	8	9	9	9	9
Delaware	206	853	241	29	31	23	29	29
District of Columbia	187	582	321	17	17	12	3	5
Florida	4,090	18,090	226	31	30	31	31	32
Georgia	2,242	9,364	239	30	25	29	27	27
Hawaii	164	1,285	128	45	45	45	45	44
Idaho	475	1,466	324	15	16	16	16	17
Illinois	1,810	12,832	141	44	43	44	43	43
Indiana	593	6,314	94	49	48	48	48	49
Iowa	729	2,982	244	27	28	25	26	24
Kansas	739	2,764	267	22	22	21	22	20
Kentucky	770	4,206	183	36	36	34	34	34
Louisiana	468	4,288	109	46	46	46	46	46
Maine	561	1,322	424	3	5	5	4	4
Maryland	1,829	5,616	326	14	15	15	14	15
Massachusetts	1,558	6,437	242	28	29	30	30	31
Michigan	2,837	10,096	281	19	20	19	19	23
Minnesota	1,113	5,167	215	32	33	33	33	33
Mississippi	79	2,911	27	51	51	51	51	51
Missouri	557	5,843	95	47	47	47	47	47
Montana	339	945	359	9	7	11	11	12
Nebraska	675	1,768	382	5	3	7	5	6
Nevada	446	2,496	179	38	39	38	38	38
New Hampshire	373	1,315	284	18	19	20	20	19
New Jersey	1,304	8,725	149	42	44	43	44	45
New Mexico	506	1,955	259	24	26	26	21	21
New York	7,359	19,306	381	6	4	4	7	7
North Carolina	3,282	8,857	371	7	8	8	8	8
North Dakota	225	636	354	10	10	6	6	3
Ohio	1,852	11,478	161	40	40	40	40	40
Oklahoma	965	3,579	270	21	21	27	23	22
Oregon	740	3,701	200	34	32	35	35	35
Pennsylvania	4,023	12,441	323	16	14	17	17	16
Rhode Island	229	1,068	215	33	34	32	32	30
South Carolina	674	4,321	156	41	41	42	41	41
South Dakota	371	782	475	2	2	2	2	2
Tennessee	885	6,039	146	43	42	41	42	42
Texas	4,259	23,508	181	37	37	36	36	36
Utah	631	2,550	247	26	27	28	25	25
Vermont	212	624	340	12	13	10	12	10
Virginia	1,492	7,643	195	35	35	39	39	39
Washington	1,800	6,396	281	20	18	18	18	18
West Virginia	701	1,818	385	4	6	3	10	11
Wisconsin	1,432	5,557	258	25	23	24	24	26
Wyoming	173	515	336	13	11	13	15	13

(a) The total number of PAs in clinical practice includes the sum of the practicing PAs in each state plus another 329 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: April 2005.