

What Optimal Team Practice Means for Healthcare

Optimal Team Practice occurs when PAs, physicians, and other healthcare professionals work together to provide quality care without burdensome administrative constraints.

To support Optimal Team Practice, states should: eliminate the legal requirement for a specific relationship between a PA, physician or any other healthcare provider in order for a PA to practice to the full extent of their education, training and experience; create a separate majority-PA board to regulate PAs or add PAs and physicians who work with PAs to medical or healing arts boards; and authorize PAs to be eligible for direct payment by all public and private insurers.

Here are some key ways Optimal Team Practice can help PAs improve healthcare:

1. Optimal Team Practice will strengthen healthcare teams.



Optimal Team Practice will make healthcare teams stronger by reducing administrative burdens and enabling practice-level decision making. State laws should not require PAs to have a specific relationship with a physician or any other healthcare provider in order to practice. Instead, decisions about the composition of healthcare teams should be made at the practice level, where the care is being provided.

2. Optimal Team Practice will expand access to care.



Eliminating the requirement for a PA to have a specific relationship with a physician will make it easier for PAs to practice in rural and medically underserved communities. It will also allow PAs to more easily provide volunteer medical services and respond to disasters and emergencies.

3. Optimal Team Practice will reduce healthcare spending.



Increasing practice flexibility will help ensure that patients are seen in the right setting, by the right provider, at the right time—which can reduce the overall cost of healthcare.

4. Optimal Team Practice will help employers meet patient needs.



When a PA is not required to have a specific relationship with a physician, health systems and hospitals can be more flexible in creating healthcare teams, which allows them to more effectively meet patient needs and reduce provider burnout. Also, allowing PAs to be eligible for direct payment by all public and private insurers will expand the number of available providers through the use of healthcare staffing companies and other business arrangements that require PAs to reassign insurance payments.