What is a PA?

PAs (physician associates/physician assistants) are licensed clinicians who practice medicine in every specialty and setting. Trusted, rigorously educated and trained healthcare professionals, PAs are dedicated to expanding access to care and transforming health and wellness through patient-centered, team-based medical practice.

AT A GLANCE

- PA profession established in 1967
- Approximately 168,300 PAs in the U.S. (NCCPA, 2023)
- PAs have more than 500 million patient interactions per year (NCCPA, 2022, all data based on clinically practicing PAs in the U.S.)

EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS

- 303 PA Programs in the U.S. (The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), 2023)
- Programs are 27 months or 3 academic years (bachelor’s degree is required for acceptance)
- Educated at master’s degree level
- 2,000 hours of clinical rotations

To obtain a license, PAs must:

- Graduate from an accredited PA program
- Pass a certification exam

To maintain their certification, PAs must complete:

- 100 hours of continuing medical education (CME after every two years)
- A recertification exam every 10 years

CERTIFICATION & LICENSING
PA Profession in the News

**Best 100 Jobs List**
U.S. News & World Report 2023

**Best Healthcare Jobs List**
U.S. News & World Report 2023

**Best STEM Jobs List**
U.S. News & World Report 2023

What Patients Say About PAs

91%
Agree PAs are part of the solution to healthcare workforce shortages

89%
Improve health outcomes for patients

93%
PAs add value to healthcare teams

*The research was conducted online in the U.S. by The Harris Poll on behalf of AAPA among 2,519 adults age 18+. The survey was conducted from February 23 – March 9, 2023. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.