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.

**What is a PA?**

**AT A GLANCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PA profession established in</th>
<th>Approximately 168,300 PAs in the U.S. (NCCPA, 2023)</th>
<th>PAs have more than 500 million patient interactions per year (NCCPA, 2022)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS**

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

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**
**PAs practice in every work setting**

- 50.9% – Outpatient Office or Clinic
- 37.5% – Hospital
- 5.9% – Urgent Care Center
- 13.3% – Other

*2022 AAPA Salary Survey, All data based on clinically practicing PAs in the U.S.*

*Other refers to a variety of work settings including but not limited to schools/universities, rehabilitation facilities, nursing homes and correctional facilities.

**PAs practice medicine in all specialties**

- 28.05% – Surgical Subspecialties
- 25.65% – Other*
- 19.83% – Primary Care
- 13.33% – Internal Medicine Subspecialties
- 7.45% – Emergency Medicine
- 4.04% – No Specialty
- 1.65% – Pediatric Subspecialties

*2022 AAPA Salary Survey, All data based on clinically practicing PAs in the U.S.*

*Other refers to a variety of healthcare settings including but not limited to psychiatry, hospice and palliative care, obstetrics and gynecology, addiction medicine, pain management, public health and dermatology.

---

**PA Profession in the News**

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

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

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

---

**“Attitudes Toward PAs: A 2014 Survey by the American Academy of PAs.”** The Harris online survey was conducted September 15–22, 2014 among 1,544 adults age 18 and older living in the US, including an oversample of 680 adults who have seen a PA and/or have accompanied a loved one to see a PA in the past 12 months. For full methodology visit aapa.org/media.

Updated May 2023