What is a PA?

PAs are medical providers who diagnose illness, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and often serve as a patient’s principal healthcare professional. With thousands of hours of medical training, PAs are versatile and collaborative. PAs practice in every state and in every medical setting and specialty, improving healthcare access and quality.

AT A GLANCE

PA profession established in 1967

Approximately 150,000 PAs in the U.S.

PAs have more than 400 million patient interactions per year

2020 AAPA Salary Survey. All data based on clinically practicing PAs in the U.S.

EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS

260 PA Programs in the U.S.

2,000 hours of clinical rotations

Educated at MASTER’S DEGREE level

Programs are 27 months or 3 academic years (bachelor’s degree is required for acceptance)

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
**PAs practice in every work setting**

- 37% - Hospital
- 5% - Urgent Care Center
- 4% - Other*
- 54% - Outpatient Office or Clinic

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

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**PAs practice medicine in all specialties**

- 21.1% - Primary Care
- 12.4% - Internal Medicine Subspecialties
- 9.5% - Emergency Medicine
- 1.5% - Pediatric Subspecialties
- 26.9% - Other*
- 28.7% - Surgical Subspecialties

*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.

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**What Patients Say About PAs**

- 93% - PAs are trusted healthcare providers
- 92% - Having a PA makes it easier to get medical appointments
- 91% - PAs improve the quality of healthcare

2014 Harris Poll*

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**PA Profession in the News**

- #1 Best 100 Jobs List
  US News & World Report, 2021
- #1 Best Healthcare Jobs List
  US News & World Report, 2021
- #5 Fastest Growing Jobs In America
  Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020

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**“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.