



# TALK TO THE MEDIA

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# PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

[Transfer this press release onto your organization's letterhead before submitting]

## [Organization] Celebrates the PA Profession

**YOUR CITY, ST (Month, Day, 2017)** – Every year, we celebrate National PA Week from October 6-12, and recognize the important contributions that PAs (physician assistants) make to **[state]**'s healthcare system. This year, PA Week is especially exciting, as we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the profession – and 50 years of providing the best possible care to our patients.

PAs are nationally certified and state-licensed medical professionals who practice on healthcare teams with physicians and other providers. There are currently more than 115,000 PAs in the country and **[number]** PAs in **[state]**.

**[Please alter/customize quote]** “The PA profession is growing every year, which allows us to provide care to more patients, especially in underserved areas with little access to healthcare,” said **[organization spokesperson]**. “We’ve accomplished a lot over the last five decades, and we’re ready for five more.”

Here at **[organization]**, we believe in our PAs and are proud of the hard work they do every day, and during PA Week, we are proud to recognize the PAs **[on our team/in our organization]** and celebrate all they do for the health of the patients they serve. To celebrate National PA Week this year, we’re also **[planning X event, showcasing our PAs’ work by doing X, recognizing our PAs by X, etc.]**.

Part of our mission is to get the word out about PAs in **[state]** and all over the country by informing general public about who PAs are and why they’re an essential part of our healthcare team.

PAs practice in every medical and surgical specialty. They also conduct physical exams, perform medical procedures, first assist in surgery, counsel patients on preventative healthcare, coordinate patient care, make rounds in nursing homes and hospitals, and conduct clinical research.

PAs are also educated through graduate-level programs that average 27 months and require the same prerequisite courses as medical schools. All PA students complete at least 2,000 hours of clinical rotations, which cover every major specialty, from family medicine to general surgery to emergency medicine.

**[Please alter/customize quote]** “Our **[team/organization]** wouldn’t be the same without the hard work of our PAs,” said **[organization spokesperson]**. “PA Week is a great opportunity to recognize them, and to say thank you.”

To learn more about PA Week and the PA profession, visit [PAweek.com](http://PAweek.com).



## OP-ED TEMPLATE

### Celebrating National PA Week

Hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare facilities are busy places, filled with the hustle and bustle of patients and clinicians. During the course of your appointments and visits, you've probably noticed various members of the healthcare team hard at work.

For the last 50 years, PAs (physician assistants) have been core members of this healthcare team. Here in **[state]**, there are **[number]** PAs moving healthcare forward. Educated and trained as medical generalists, we practice in every setting and specialty, with the goal of providing each patient with the best care possible.

From October 6-12, we're celebrating PA Week, which recognizes our profession and its contributions to the nation's health. During PA Week, we hope you'll have the chance to talk to a PA about what it is we do, and why we're so proud to do it.

We're also very excited to celebrate our profession's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The PA profession has come a long way since the first class of PAs graduated in 1967. Now, there are more than 200 PA programs awarding graduate degrees to students who have completed rigorous classroom coursework and an average of 2,000 hours of clinical rotations in family medicine, internal medicine, general surgery and psychiatry.

Today, the PA profession is more than 115,000 strong and growing rapidly.

PAs are looking forward to the next 50 years of taking care of our patients, making healthcare accessible, especially to people in rural and underserved areas of the country.

Here in **[state]**, we are in the midst of an unprecedented **[If appropriate]** physician shortage and a complex opioid crisis **[or other epidemic, if more appropriate]** – and PAs are on the front lines. Always innovative and always flexible, PAs are the solution to some of our system's biggest problems.

In every state, PAs, their state organizations, and the American Academy of PAs are working together with state legislatures to modernize laws and regulations in an effort to remove unnecessary and antiquated barriers to care for patients.

Patients have trusted PAs and relied on PAs for the last five decades. As we look to the next five, PAs in **[state]** are ready and excited to take on new challenges, and continue serving our patients.



## PUBLISHING YOUR OP-ED

One of the most effective ways to educate the public about the PA profession is by publishing an op-ed in a local newspaper or online publication. An op-ed is a brief commentary on a topic that has been in the news recently, or a topic that is familiar to most readers. Short for “opposite the editorial page,” op-eds allow newspapers to diversify their content, and publish opinion pieces written by the general public. Unlike letters to the editor, op-eds do not have to be in response to a specific piece of content, and can be written on any topic.

To help spread the word about PA Week and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the PA profession, we have included a template op-ed for your organization to submit to local press. Once you’ve customized the op-ed by filling in information about your state and your organization, follow the tips below to get it published.

### SUBMISSION

- Go to your newspaper or online publication’s web site and look for submission guidelines, usually found within the opinions section. Check for a word limit – usually around 500-900 words. Cut down the op-ed based on the word limit, if necessary.
- Follow the submission guidelines exactly, making sure to send the op-ed in the publication’s requested format. Send your own contact information, as well, so the editor can easily get in touch with you.
- If submitting the op-ed by email, briefly introduce yourself. Include the name of your organization and the reason for your submission – that PA Week is coming up, and you believe the publication’s readers would be interested in learning more about PAs.
- Submit your op-ed at least two weeks before you want it to run. Only submit your op-ed to one newspaper at a time. Publications tend to be strict about editorial content, and you should wait until the first paper declines (usually 2-4 days) before submitting it elsewhere.
- If you don’t receive a response after submitting your op-ed, in most cases (unless the publication states otherwise in its submission guidelines) you can send a polite follow up email.

### PUBLICATION

- If your op-ed is selected, don’t be surprised if the editorial team rewrites your headline or edits your piece. They may even send it back to you and ask you to make changes, or approve theirs.
- Once your op-ed is published, be sure to send a brief thank you to the publication. Then, share the piece on social media – and let AAPA know it was published!



## STUDENT RADIO STATION SPOT

Does your college or university have a student-run station? You might not have heard about it, but your school probably has at least one. Student media is a great way to spread the word about PA Week and your PA program, so we've included a radio script as well as some pitching guidelines to help get you on the air. The goal is just to get 30 seconds to a minute of airtime with a quick message.

### THE SCRIPT

Hey everyone, my name is **[your name]**, and I'm currently studying to be a physician assistant, otherwise known as a PA, in the **[name of program]**.

**[This/next]** week is National PA Week – our favorite time of year! October 6<sup>th</sup> through October 12<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate our future profession through community service events and social media challenges, and we also do our best to go out and educate the public about PAs.

PA programs are graduate-level and usually last around 27 months. We complete 2,000 hours of clinical rotations in every major specialty, and go on to practice medicine on healthcare teams.

This week, we hope you'll stop to chat with one of us about what we do. Make sure to drop by [PAweek.com](http://PAweek.com), and check out [#PAweek](https://twitter.com/PAweek) on social media to learn more.

### PITCHING

- Find the web site for your school's radio station and look for a contact page. If you aren't sure if your school has a station or how to find it, look for a list of campus media outlets on your school's web site.
- Send the station's contact a brief email explaining that PA Week is coming up, and ask whether it's possible to get 30 seconds to a minute of airtime to promote it. They may ask you to record the spot on your own ahead of time, or come in in person.
- If the station is interested and asks for an on-air interview, take it! It's a great opportunity to talk about your program and about PAs.
- If you don't hear back from the station, you can send a polite follow-up email. Don't send more than one.