**Q1. Scope Change**

1) How do Army PAs desire their scope of practice to change over the next 50 years?
   - Army PAs discussed their primary mission in supporting the Warfighter.
   - The PA identified a need to capitalize in telemedicine when providing continuity of care between physicians and PAs and medics supporting patient care in the field.
   - The PAs discussed the potential for an entry level doctorate PA to be the new standard.

2) How do Army PAs desire their breadth of specializations to change over the next 50 years?
   - They see themselves focusing on the Warfighter with a vision of an interdisciplinary PA team based on operational need so they can focus on expeditionary care across the range of military operations – be it at the primary care level or broadening their knowledge in other subspecialties.
   - Army PAs also want to be clinically relevant as master clinicians and involved in the Army institutional construct by holding leadership positions within training, doctrine, curriculum development and graduate and postgraduate medical education.
   - The Army PA profession will monitor the Military Health Care (MHC) System to respond to emerging requirements secondary to physician shortages or expanding mission profiles.

**Q2. Breadth of Specializations**

3) How do Army PAs desire their focus of mission to change over the next 50 years?
   - Army PAs discussed the transition to DHA with the potential ability to have interagency relationships with local medical facilities and maintain proficiency by working in civilian facilities while performing their military mission.
   - There is an opportunity to further our work with sister services, federal agencies, and to position PAs into senior clinical and supervisory roles.

4) How do Army PAs desire to see their institutional role 50 years from now?
   - Army PAs see themselves as the center of gravity for medical care.
   - Army PAs are subject to multiple career paths and they foresee a PA at every level of command, tactical to strategic, performing as senior advisors and in key billets.
   - Army PAs are a need to educate leadership at every level on their value and the parity of having general officer representative from the SP Corps.
   - The SP Corps is expeditious and supports the Warfighter especially with the emerging role of the Holistic Health and Fitness Model (H2F) where all aspects of fragmentation will have a role.

**RAND Recommendations**

RAND recommends the Army PA community continue with more in depth conversations to intentionally build upon this event. They also recommend:

- Adjusting future initiatives discussion to a 15 year timeline for more foreseeable and actionable plan.
- Discussing trends affecting the PA community and the implications of those trends on policy and education. This will allow the Army PA community to prioritize efforts towards those trends and indicators to maintain maximum speed.
- Asking ourselves “How will the strategic policy and education changes made in response to the trends and indicators improve our ability to support the Warfighter on future battlefield?”

**Discussion**

Current Senior PA Leadership would like to capitalize in the last 50 years’ successes of Army Physician Assistants and move toward the future in an intentional manner. In this discussion, understanding where PAs started and where we have gone from that initial concept is critical. But more important is forecasting where PAs will be best utilized to support the health of the Warfighter and future role to continue.

This discussion methods of forecasting what the future could look like.

It would be easier if predicting where PAs will be in 50 years relied solely on historical mathematical data inputs and objective trend variables, but when looking at a relative young profession that has many internal and external influences, the task becomes much more complex. It requires an understanding of the multivariant environment in which the Army PA works. Therefore, the initial phase of the project utilized expert panel discussion.

The expert panel discussed the possible influencing forces and decisions on the variables that will exert the majority of the influence on the Army PA profession. This included factors internal to the Army as well as external variables. The result was identifying five topics that the Senior PA Leaders thought would have the most significant influence on how and where PAs are best utilized in the military in the next 50 years.

**Conclusion/Future Steps**

The Senior PA Leadership team, through the discussions led by RAND, determined that an in depth look of the trends is clinical, command and leadership, research, mentorship and strategy were required. Looking at these trends in both the military and civilian medicine are required. These topics were driving forces in determining how the future of PAs would be utilized and necessary to identify routes to get to where we wanted to go in the next 15 years. A group of Army PAs have started researching these topics to drive future discussions with Senior Leadership and RAND. Additionally, military medical surveys were conducted based on the four questions generated from this initial questionnaire with RAND.

**Bibliography**