

# The Call for PAs to Take on the World's Smallest Patients; Why the World Needs PAs in Neonatology

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AAPA 2020

## Background:

- The PA profession is answering the call for taking care of the country's aging population, but what about the needs of the youngest?
- As technology and understanding of prematurity has advanced, the need for capable providers in Neonatology continues to grow.
- The training for PAs elicit their abilities for a foundation in general medicine knowledge, but additional education/training, outside of current PA school practices, are needed for PAs to answer the call in Neonatology.

## Description:

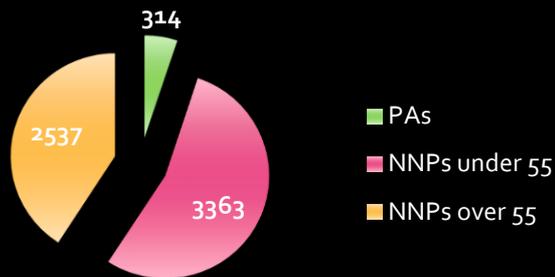
- The medicine and knowledge needed to take care of neonates by advanced practice providers (APPs) are vastly different to the needs of other populations.
- In the NICU, APPs are trained to perform delivery room resuscitations and to work with neonatologists to assess, diagnose, prescribe, perform procedures, and help develop care plans for neonates.
- NICU provider shortage from through NNP's retiring and lack of new NNP graduates.

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The majority of current practitioners in the NICU are NNPs; however, the need for additional personnel has led PAs to fill a need within this niche of medicine. Hospitals have recognized the ability of PAs to fulfill this need and have implemented fellowship programs to educate PAs in Neonatology.

## National NICU APPs by Numbers



## By the Numbers:

- On average, there are 266 new NNP grads per year
- Yearly, there are approximately 400 job openings in the NICU setting creating a practitioner void that NNP grads cannot fill

## References:

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## Results:

- Current centers are developing a 12-month fellowship ranging from the well-newborn nursery to high-risk deliveries, to complex, critically ill infants in the NICU.
- Within the training, the PA learns how to examine a neonate, perform procedures, prescribe medications, and order nutritional supplementation not seen in other populations.
- Throughout the different units, the PA has direct hands-on experiences with different departments throughout the NICU stemming from bedside nursing, transport team, therapies, etc.
- The PA completes medical outlines based on the most common disease states and clinical techniques that encompass the care of the newborn.

## Discussion:

- As the PA profession continues to evolve to fulfill the needs of the general public, the expanding field of Neonatology will start to look to the PA profession to fill a practitioner void.
- With the advent and completion of the 12-month fellowship, the PA 'fellow' is ready to start a career in the neonatal setting.
- The PA profession can prove as a valuable asset to the Neonatology community.