

Join One of the **Fastest** Growing Careers in America

Become a Physician Assistant

- **Make a difference in the lives of the patients you treat**
- **Receive quality medical education and earn national certification**
- **Enjoy high levels of job satisfaction**
- **Have the ability to change medical specialties without additional training**
- **Find opportunities in all areas of medicine**



The Physician Assistant Profession

Physician assistants (PAs) are licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision and are authorized to prescribe in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam. As part of their comprehensive responsibilities, PAs conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery, and write prescriptions.

By choosing to become a physician assistant, you are entering one of the fastest growing and most highly regarded professions in the country. A recent *Money* magazine article ranked the PA profession one of the fastest growing of all the professions it considered and ranked it second overall on a broad range of criteria. The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the number of PA jobs will increase by 39 percent between 2008 and 2018. There were over 75,000 PAs in clinical practice in 2009 and 12,000 students in PA programs around the country.

Practice — PAs are educated in a generalist model of medicine, which gives them the flexibility to be employed in all areas of medicine. They practice in family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, and obstetrics and gynecology, as well as in any specialty fields such as cardiovascular surgery, orthopedics, and emergency medicine.

Income — Results of the 2009 American Academy of Physician Assistants' (AAPA) PA Census Survey indicate that the mean total income from primary employers for PAs who are not self-employed and who work at least 32 hours per week for their primary employer is \$93,105.

What PAs Say About Their Career Choice

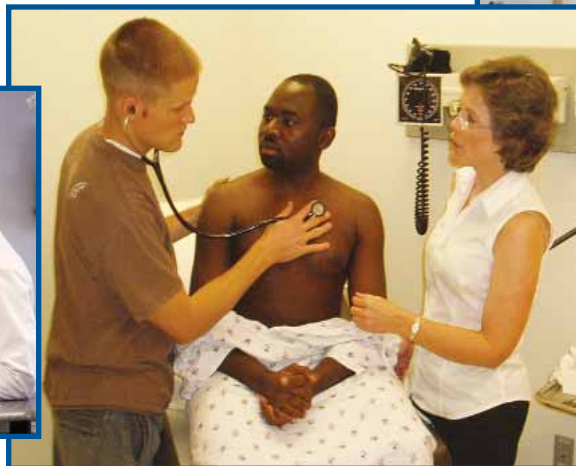
“I wanted to become a PA because I saw how other PAs enjoyed their profession.”

“It has everything I was looking for: patient contact, science and medical knowledge, hands-on work.”

“I’m here because PAs are some of the finest health care practitioners I’ve met. I want to be that ‘go-to-guy,’ the practitioner that provides primary care on a daily basis.”

“I want a career that has enough flexibility so that I can explore different areas of medicine — if I want to teach, do research, etc. I want to touch lives!”

“I want to become a PA because I will be able to enjoy a lifelong learning experience, work in a health care team setting, and be able to balance my life and family life with my career.”



Job Satisfaction

According to AAPA, 89 percent of practicing PAs would choose the profession again if they were choosing a career today. Contributing factors to PA job satisfaction are the ability to practice medicine while working with physicians, the relationships developed with other health care team members, and the flexibility to change specialties and work settings without additional training.

PA Education

There are currently almost 150 accredited PA programs in the United States. They are located at medical schools and academic health centers, two- and four-year colleges and universities, hospitals, and in the military.

PA programs offer a variety of credentials and entry pathways, though all have to meet the same accreditation standards, and all graduates must pass the same national certifying examination (PANCE) to be able to practice medicine.

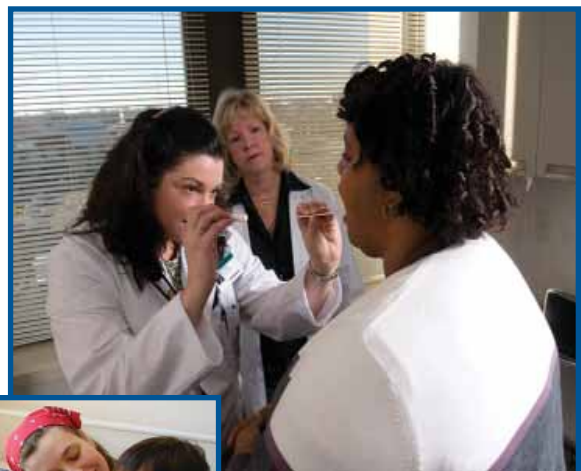
Most PA programs are master's-level programs that typically require either a bachelor's degree or appropriate undergraduate credit, with a minimum GPA. A college degree is not always required; however, you will need to have taken some college-level courses before applying to a PA program. Programs offering bachelor's degrees typically require a minimum of two years of college credit. Most programs require health care experience prior to admission. Recently several insti-

tutions have also been developing a new model of program that is designed for high school graduates. In these programs, students complete core college requirements in a preprofessional phase and later move into the professional phase for training as a PA. Frequently, these programs award both bachelor's and master's degrees.

The structure of education programs for PA students is similar to that for medical students, although shorter in length. (The average medical school education is four years, plus residency; the average PA education program is 27 months.) Most PA programs take 24–27 months to complete, with about 12 months of classroom studies followed by 12–15 months of supervised clinical rotations. A small number of programs offer part-time education to allow students who are changing careers to attend classes and continue to work.

Completing the Application Process

Prospective students are advised to apply to several programs since admission is highly competitive and selection criteria may vary according to the individual institution's philosophy. Applicants should plan carefully to ensure that their previous education and employment experiences enhance their chances for admission. The large majority of PA programs accept applications only through the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA), a web-based service of the Physician Assistant Education Association. See the next page for more information.



Photographs in this brochure were provided by Stony Brook University, the University of Colorado Denver, the University of Utah, and Wake Forest University.

PA Programs Directory

Choosing the best PA program for you

To obtain a detailed profile of each PA program, the best resource is the PA Programs Directory, available through the PAEA website at www.PAEAonline.org, for \$35 a year. This resource lists useful information, including contact information, admissions deadlines, entrance requirements, curriculum, tuition, and much more for each of the almost 150 accredited programs in the country. The directory's search function allows subscribers to search by tuition level, credential awarded, application deadline, CASPA participation, health experience requirement, and many other criteria. The directory is an essential tool for applicants, counselors, educators, and librarians.



A listing of PA programs and more information about PA education and the profession can be found on the PAEA website at www.PAEAonline.org under Applicants. For more information about PA practice, please visit the American Academy of Physician Assistants' website at www.aapa.org.



Central Application Service for Physician Assistants

Applying to programs has never been easier. You can apply to multiple programs online with one application through the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). Of the nearly 150 accredited PA programs in the country, more than 120 participate in CASPA.



CASPA provides the following benefits to applicants:

- An efficient way to apply to multiple PA programs with a single application
- The ability to enter all basic information just once, using a secure, online, state-of-the-art application
- An easy way to update contact information and program designations through dedicated portals
- Cost-effectiveness: Only a single set of transcripts and references is required
- 24-hour online access to verify and track the status of your application material
- A standard, comprehensive presentation of credentials for each program to which you apply



For more information, visit the CASPA website, www.caspaonline.org, or contact customer service at (617) 612-2080; caspainfo@caspaonline.org. Launched in 2001, CASPA is a web-based application service of the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA).