



## What is a PA?

PAs are competency-trained medical providers who diagnose illness, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and often serve as a patient's principal provider.

PAs are versatile, highly trained, and improve access to quality healthcare in every medical specialty and practice location.



**178,708**  
PAs in the U.S.

*NCCPA, 2023*

PAs have more than  
**500 MILLION**  
patient interactions  
per year



NCCPA, 2022  
All data based on clinically practicing PAs in the U.S.



## REFERENCES

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2. Kurtzman E, Barnow B. A comparison of nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and primary care physicians' patterns of practice and quality of care in health centers. *Med Care.* 2017;55(1):615-22.
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# Why Hire a Certified PA?

PA Training, Utilization, and Enhancement of the Healthcare System

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## PA Education and Training

PA education requires 24-27 months (3 academic years) of rigorous, accredited, masters-level medical education. Competitive bachelor's degrees are required to matriculate into a PA program.

PAs have over 2000 hours of direct clinical training across all primary care and general practice specialties and subspecialties.

PAs must pass a national certification exam, recertify every 10 years and maintain 100 hours of continuing education every two years.

There are over 260 PA programs in the US.




## PAs and Team Practice

The PA profession was founded on the concept of collaborative practice, and today, PAs enhance care coordination, patient access, and care quality.

The original one-to-one PA-Physician team has evolved into a wide variety of effective collaborations. In many practices, PAs manage their own patients or are the only medical provider on site. Some practices use a model in which both the physician and PA care for patients together.

PAs in surgical practices perform preoperative H&Ps, perform procedures, first assist in surgery, and provide a full scope of postoperative management. PA-surgeon teams have been shown to reduce operative anesthesia times and patients' lengths of stay.

The most successful clinical teams are those that utilize the skills of each team member most fully. Modern PA practice laws seek to allow healthcare teams to decide at the practice level how they will best collaborate to meet the needs of their patients.



## PAs and Quality of Care

Numerous evidence-based studies have demonstrated that PAs provide high quality, competent, and safe patient care in nearly all specialties and settings, similar to that of physicians. Care provided by PAs is enhanced when PAs are utilized appropriately.

PAs are highly trusted by patients, and the vast majority of patients feel PAs improve the quality of healthcare while also improving access to care.

PAs want to be recognized and responsible for the optimal, effective, safe, and quality care they provide for their patients.

Through education and training, collaboration and autonomy, quality and safety, PAs help to enhance the health care system in which they practice.

To find out more, visit our websites:  
[VAPA.org/Advocacy](http://VAPA.org/Advocacy)  
[AAPA.org/Advocacy](http://AAPA.org/Advocacy)

