

## Physician Assistant Definition

The physician assistant (PA) is a unique health care provider who is licensed by the State Board of Medicine or certified by the State Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners. The Boards approve physician assistants who are of good character and reputation, have graduated from a physician assistant training program certified by the Board, and have passed a national certifying examination by the Board.

The PA is neither a physician nor a physician trainee, e.g., resident, intern, or medical student.

At the direction of a supervising physician and as his employee, the PA provides medical services and other tasks as allowed by law.

The physician assistant augments the physician's data gathering abilities in order to assist the supervising physician in reaching and instituting care plans for the physician's patients.

Tasks performed by physician assistants include screening patients to determine the need for medical attention, reviewing patient records to determine health status, taking a patient history, performing a physical examination, recording patient data, making decisions regarding data gathering and appropriate management and treatment of patients being seen for the initial evaluation or the follow-up evaluation of a previously diagnosed and stabilized condition, preparing patient summaries, initiating requests for commonly performed initial laboratory studies, collecting specimens, identifying findings and abnormal findings on history, physical examinations and lab studies, initiating evaluation and emergency management for emergency situations, performing numerous clinical procedures, and providing counseling and instruction regarding common patient problems. Each supervising physician designates in writing how the physician assistant will provide assistance.

Patients have the right to be seen by the physician instead of the PA. If this is your wish, please inform the office personnel.

Please direct any questions, comments, or concerns about physician assistants to the doctor.