

The Physician-PA Team

Improving Access to Patient Care

Physician Assistant Profession

- Began in 1965 at Duke University
- Experienced army corpsmen and combat medics
- Based on fast-track training of physicians during World War II

Physician Assistant Definition

- Health Professionals licensed to practice medicine with Physician supervision
- Clinical role includes primary and specialty care in medical and surgical settings, in rural and urban areas
- PA's exercise autonomy in medical decision making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services

Definition continued

- Qualified by graduation from accredited educational programs
- Practice is centered on patient care and may include clinical, educational, research and administrative activities

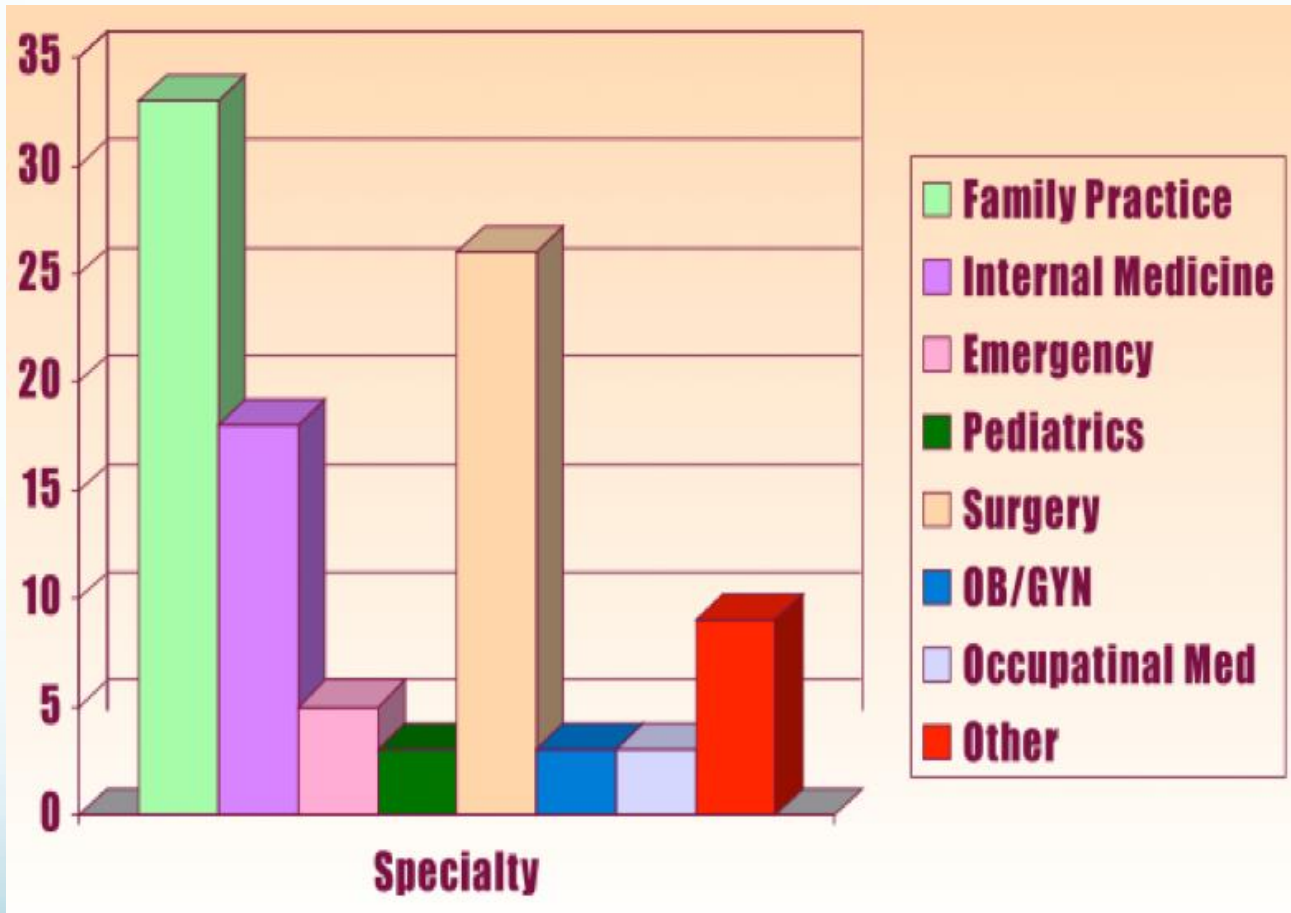
PA Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Taking medical histories
- Performing physical exams
- Diagnosing common illnesses
- Ordering and interpreting laboratory tests
- Determining treatment regimens
- Providing patient education
- Promoting wellness
- Assisting in surgery
- Prescribing Medications

PA Primary Work Settings

- PAs work in a variety of practice settings including:
 - Family practice, Internal medicine, Emergency medicine, OB/Gyn, Government institutions, Surgery and as house officers.
 - Slightly more than 25% practice in a primary care setting

Practice by Specialty in Pennsylvania



Physician Assistant Education



Physician Assistant Education Program Accreditation

ARC-PA

Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the
Physician Assistant

- Nationally : Over 220 Accredited programs
- Pennsylvania: 23 Accredited programs

Physician Assistant Education Program Accreditation

Standards approved by

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Academy of Physician Assistants

American College of Physicians

American Society of Internal Medicine

American College of Surgeons

American Medical Association

Association of Physician Assistant Programs

Physician Assistant Education

Commitment to Team practice

- PA / Physician Team strongly emphasized
- Curriculum follows medical model designed to complement Physician training
- Students are taught to diagnose and treat medical problems.

Physician Assistant Education

Commitment to Team practice (continued)

- Classroom and laboratory instruction provided by Physicians and PAs
- Clinical rotations provide direct patient contact
- All PA programs must have a Medical Director as mandated by the accreditation standards

Physician Assistant Education

- PA Program Curriculum
 - Didactic Phase
 - 12months basic medical science courses
 - Clinical Phase
 - 12 months Clinical rotations and ongoing classroom instruction

Didactic Phase

- Behavioral Social Sciences
- Basic Medical Sciences
 - Human Anatomy
 - Physiology
 - Pathophysiology
 - Pharmacology
- Clinical Medicine
 - Clinical Prep Sciences
 - H&P: across life span
 - Clinical procedures
 - Clinical Decision Making
 - Clinical Assessment
 - Public Health
 - Issues in PA Practice
 - Medical Ethics/Health Policy

Clinical Phase

- Family Practice
- Internal Medicine
- Pediatrics
- Prenatal Care and gynecology
- Psychiatry
- Surgery
- Geriatrics
- Emergency Medicine

Program Design

Variations exist among different institutions but all meet same national accreditation standards

Physician Assistant Employment



Credentials & State Regulations

- Graduate from accredited PA programs
- Successfully pass national certifying exam
- Acquire state license
- To maintain national certification one must:
 - complete 100 hours of continuing medical education every 2 years
 - take a re-certifying exam every 10 years
- Obtain DEA numbers if appropriate
- Credentials:
 - hospital privileges

Two Regulatory Boards in Pennsylvania Govern PA Practice

- State Board of Medicine
(if supervisor is an M.D.)
- State Board of Osteopathic Medicine
(if supervisor is a D.O.)

Written Agreements Needed

- Duties to be performed by PA
- Location of practice
- Alternate Supervisors
- Medication categories that will not be prescribed

The Physician-PA Relationship

- One of “delegated” autonomy
- PA is “agent” of the physician
 - The PAs orders are treated by regulation as if they were given by the physician
- Primary supervising physicians can only supervise four PAs
- PAs can perform any and all duties and procedures customary to the practice of their supervising physician
- PAs cannot perform duties and procedures not customary to the practice of their supervising physician

Benefits to the Practice

- Quicker scheduling
- General increase in net income
- Enlarging the practice size while saving the physician(s) time
- Expansion of office hours
- Triage of phone calls and test results
- Office/personnel management role

Benefits to the Physician

- No addition to physician work load
- Increased time to spend in OR and the hospital
- Increased time for “more complex” patient management
- More openings for consultations
- Increased time for procedures
- Split night and weekend call
- More efficient hospital rounds
- Help with medical record completion

Benefits to the Patient

- More time per patient encounter
- Extended office hours
- Same day walk-in care
- Increased access in reaching medical provider by phone

Expansion of Services

- Patient Education
- Nursing home rounds
- Women's health
- Home visit program
- Rehab/sports medicine program
- Rural health clinic certification

Web Sites

- www.aapa.org
- American Academy of Physician Assistants
- www.pspa.net
- Pennsylvania Society of Physician Assistants