

PAs are nationally certified and state licensed medical providers trained to diagnose and treat patients as well as prescribe medication. Thanks to an education modeled on the medical school curriculum, PAs learn to make life-saving diagnostic and therapeutic decisions while working autonomously or in collaboration with other members of the healthcare team. PAs are certified as medical generalists with a foundation in primary care.



For more information about PAs visit aapa.org

© 2018 American Academy of PAs

Meeting patients' needs
in a changing healthcare
system is a big job.

America's PAs should know.
They're doing it every day.

PAs are trusted healthcare providers. Studies have shown that PAs help reduce hospital readmission rates, lengths of stay and infection rates.

Today, there are more than 123,000 certified PAs in the United States.



Q. What is a PA?

A. A PA is a licensed medical provider who can diagnose, test, treat and prescribe medication for patients.

Like physicians, the exact duties of PAs depend on the type of medical setting in which they work, their level of experience, their specialty and state laws.

PAs can:

- Conduct physical exams
- Diagnose and treat illnesses
- Order and interpret tests
- Develop treatment plans
- Counsel on preventive healthcare
- Assist in surgery
- Write prescriptions

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the majority of U.S. territories have laws or regulations for PA practice.

Q. Will my insurance cover an appointment with a PA?

A. Generally, insurance companies will reimburse for a visit to a PA the same as a visit to a physician. Medical and surgical services delivered by PAs are covered by Medicare, Medicaid and nearly all private payers.

Q. Where do PAs work?

A. PAs provide care in all general practice settings as well as all specialty areas of medicine.

PAs treat patients in:

- Hospitals
- Physician offices
- Rural and urban community health centers
- Nursing homes
- Retail clinics
- Schools and university-based facilities
- Industrial settings
- Correctional institutions
- The uniformed services and other federal government agencies

Q. How are PAs educated?

A. PAs typically acquire extensive healthcare training and experience before they enter an intense, graduate-level program that requires the same prerequisite courses as medical schools. In the classroom, PA students take courses in basic sciences, behavioral sciences and clinical medicine across subjects such as anatomy, pharmacology, microbiology, physiology and more. Students then participate in an average of 1,700 hours of clinical rotations in specialties including:

- Family medicine
- Internal medicine
- OB/GYN
- Pediatrics
- General surgery
- Orthopaedics
- Emergency medicine
- Psychiatry
- Geriatrics

