What is a PA?

PAs (physician associates/physician assistants) are licensed clinicians who practice medicine in every specialty and setting.

Trusted, rigorously educated and trained healthcare professionals, PAs are dedicated to expanding access to care and transforming health and wellness through patient-centered, team-based medical practice.

FAST FACTS ABOUT PAs

Education

- Medical model-often within the College of Medicine
- In-classroom didactics
- 3 academic year Master's Degree

Training

- 2,000+ hrs of clinical rotations
- 5 accredited programs in Oklahoma
- Must pass National Board Exam

Board Certification Maintenance

- 100 hrs CME every 2 yrs (50 Cat 1)
- Board Exams every 10 years
- Juris Prudence Exam each year

Oklahoma PA License Maintenance

- 20 hours of Category 1 CME each calendar year
- 1-hour of substance abuse training each calendar year

The PA profession is working to update state and federal laws to enable Optimal Team Practice, which occurs when PAs, physicians, and other healthcare professionals work together to provide quality care without burdensome administrative constraints.

OAPA
Oklahoma Academy of Physician Associates
EST. 1974

How are PAs educated?

A PA's medical education and training are rigorous. The PA school curriculum is modeled on the medical school curriculum, which involves both didactic and clinical education training.

PA Programs require a bachelor's degree as well as completion of pre-medical and behavioral science prerequisites. The overall average GPA of PA matriculates is 3.6 and the average science GPA is 3.5.

Incoming PA students bring with them an average of more than 3,000 hours of direct patient contact experience, having worked as paramedics, athletic trainers, or medical assistants, for example.

In the didactic phase, students take courses in graduate level medical sciences, behavioral sciences, and behavioral ethics.

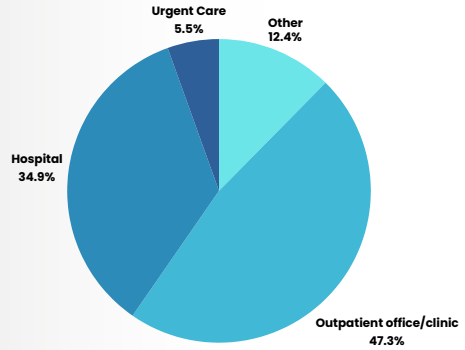
In the clinical phase, students complete more than 2,000 hours of clinical rotations in medical and surgical disciplines, including family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, general surgery, emergency medicine, and psychiatry.

Where do PAs work?

There are more than 178,700 PAs who practice in every medical setting in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, with over 2400 active PAs in Oklahoma. They work in hospitals, medical offices, community health centers, nursing homes, retail clinics, educational facilities, workplace clinics, and correctional institutions. PAs also serve in the nation's uniformed services and work for other federal government agencies, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Practice

PAs practice in every work setting



What can a PA do?

PAs' specific duties depend on the setting in which they work, their level of experience, their specialty, and state laws.

Generally, PAs can:

- Take medical histories
- Conduct physical exams
- Diagnose and treat illness
- Order and interpret tests
- Develop treatment plans
- Prescribe medication
- Counsel on preventive care
- Perform procedures
- Assist in surgery
- Make rounds in hospitals and nursing homes
- Lead clinical research