



Letter to the editor: In response to article, Lack of MDs worsening ER crowding, The Gazette, March 21, 2012.

PAAs can help Montrealers access family doctors

A team of researchers from Montreal have found that “Quebecers who don’t have a regular family physician are more likely to visit the emergency room just to see a doctor.” There are over 300,000 Montrealers that do not have access to a family doctor and it is suggested that this is causing patients to flood emergency rooms to receive medical care. Physician Assistants (PAs) can be part of the solution and potentially help to alleviate emergency room crowding. PAs can be employed in primary care settings to extend the physicians services thereby potentially expanding the physicians practice and allowing him/her to see more patients.

PAs have a high level of medical training and can perform tasks similar to that of their supervising physician, essentially extending the physicians practice. PAs have a close and dependent relationship with physicians and function with negotiated autonomy. Physician supervision can be done onsite or remotely.

Perhaps now is the time to integrate PAs into the Quebec health system. Patients would be the big winners, with increased access to care, reduced wait times and quality medical care. In addition by introducing PAs into primary care settings this could help to reduce the congestion in emergency departments in the province.

Louis-François Robichaud
Quebec Chapter President, the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants