



Checklist for Physicians Employing Physician Assistants

The following is a checklist developed by the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants (CAPA) and is intended to be used as a reference for employers seeking to hire a Physician Assistant in their institution, facility or practice. Physician Assistants (PAs) working with physicians can improve access to quality care for patients by reducing wait times, left without being seen rates and can even augment a physician's practice in a cost effective manner. Listed below are important items to consider before employing a PA.

- Are you familiar with the Physician Assistant (PA) profession, role and Scope of Practice?**
(This information can be found on the CAPA website: <https://capa-acam.ca/about-pas/canmeds-pa/>)
- Have you thought about how you want to use the PA in your practice?**
- Have you spoken to other physicians who currently employ PAs in their practice to find out how this individual can best complement your practice?**
- Are PAs regulated in the province in which you practice?**
You will need to determine this and verify the provincial legislation (*Medical Act*) governing the physician's capability to delegate to health professionals. If regulated, by whom and what are the current standards of practice as deemed appropriately by the regulatory body? If unregulated, are they able to practice by way of delegation under the provincial *Medical Act*?
- Have you done your research in terms of salary and benefits for the PA?**

Salaries for PAs are commensurate with their experience and professional responsibilities.
- Are you going to be the primary supervising physician for the PA?**

It is essential to the Physician/PA Model of care that PAs work under the supervision of a licensed physician. Ensure that you are providing adequate supervision of the PA. Supervising physicians can provide direct and indirect supervision. Consult your provincial/territorial regulatory college to determine the specific requirements in your jurisdiction.

How are you planning on obtaining funding to employ a PA in your practice?

Some provincial governments offer programs that will provide partial or full funding for a PA in a physician's practice for a specified period of time. Check with the ministry of health or regional health authority for more details. Many physicians and institutions are providing funding for PAs from their operational budgets. Currently, provincial funding models do not permit physicians to bill for care provided by a PA.

Does your facility have liability insurance coverage for the PA?

Physicians working with a PA in a clinical setting are generally eligible for liability protection through the Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA). PAs are not eligible for liability protection through the CMPA. PAs are able to access liability insurance through CAPA with the broker Willis. PAs employed by a hospital, region or institution should have adequate liability protection through the employer's insurance provider. PAs employed by a physician or private group practice must seek out and maintain their own liability protection. Currently, two brokers of liability insurance are The Health Insurance Reciprocal of Canada (HIROC), which only insures PAs working in institutions, and Willis Insurance which PAs can obtain as a benefit of their Canadian Association of Physician Assistants' membership. Personal PA liability protection must address all aspects or areas of the PA's employment and provide protection that is appropriate considering the risks posed by the duties likely to be carried out by the PA. Ensure that liability protection is commensurate with the degree of risk created by the tasks that may be delegated to the PA. For a full understanding of the medico-legal risks, physicians are encouraged to contact the CMPA before they enter into a working arrangement with a PA (www.cmpa-acpm.ca or 1-800-267-6522).

Have you started to think about developing medical directives?

Physician Assistants work through delegation and medical directives. These need to be in place prior to or very soon after hiring.

Have you spoken to your staff about employing a PA?

It is important to set the stage from the beginning and to obtain support for this new position before the PA is even hired.

Do the PA applicants have the necessary qualifications to practice?

Once you start the interviewing process you will want to ensure that the PA applicants have the necessary qualifications to practice. Important things to consider are: Education and certification. You will want to verify that the PA you are interviewing has graduated from a Canadian Medical Association accredited Physician Assistant program. A list of the programs offered in Canada can be found on the CAPA website: <http://capa-acam.ca/pa-students/pa-education-programs/>. In provinces where PAs are regulated it is necessary for the PA to be certified by either the Physician Assistant Certification Council of Canada (PACCC) or the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). The designation for a Canadian Certified Physician Assistant is CCPA and for American certified Physician Assistants it is PA-C. In provinces and territories where PAs are not required to be certified it is still highly recommended as a requirement for employment.

Upon completion of this checklist if you have unanswered questions or require additional information you can contact CAPA directly admin@capa-acam.ca or by phone 1-877-744-2272. Good luck with your search.