



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Physician Assistants A Solution to Health Care Woes in Canada

Despite evidence of the value of PAs, report card shows that many provinces are way behind

November 27, 2014, Ottawa – As political and health care leaders from across Canada celebrate and recognize the value of Physician Assistants (PAs) on National PA Day, the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants (CAPA), released a National Report Card highlighting the progress in some provinces vs. others in integrating PAs into the health care system. Despite evidence from across North America demonstrating the value of PAs in helping to reduce wait times and improve health care, several provinces have been slow to move forward.

“We are very excited about our demonstrable success in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and New Brunswick, where PAs are working in emergency rooms, hospitals and long-term care homes, under the supervision of physicians to help improve access to care and wait times,” said Mark McLennan, Acting National President, CAPA. “This success, combined with overwhelming public support for PAs in every jurisdiction of the country means we should be pushing forward to add PAs to the health care team right across Canada.”

A [recent poll](#) undertaken by Nanos Research reveals that more than eight in ten Canadians support a greater role for PAs. Further, 75% of those who received care from a PA were satisfied with the level of care that they had received, demonstrating the quality of care that PAs are providing patients in the jurisdictions where PAs are practicing.

PAs are helping an already stressed health care system to reduce costs and wait times. Studies have shown that PAs are an affordable solution to the current health human resources challenge and have been shown to reduce wait times and improve access to care. PAs can work in a variety of specialties and have yielded significant results in primary care, emergency medicine and orthopaedic settings.

CAPA took the opportunity of National PA Day to issue a national report card rating the different regions across the country on how they are progressing in terms of incorporating PAs. Manitoba and New Brunswick receive top score for their implementation. Alberta and Ontario are a close second and are leading the way for the rest of the country in terms of utilization of PAs in their health care systems. CAPA is challenging other provinces and territories to move forward with this important health profession and start integrating PAs into their clinics, hospitals and tertiary care centres to start improving access to care for Canadians.

Page 1 of 3

While a relatively new profession in Canada, PAs have been practicing in the Canadian Armed Forces for over 50 years and have been instrumental in providing a high level of care to soldiers on the front lines. PAs are physician extenders. With roughly 450 PAs working alongside their physician partners and other health care professions, PAs can help Canadians access the care they need.

REPORT CARD

CAPA has undertaken an analysis of the utilization of PAs in different regions across the country and has awarded a score based on a series of criteria including: PAs currently practicing in the region; availability of academic PA programs; regulation of the profession, public awareness; public support for a greater role for PAs and requirements for certification.

Province/Territory	PAs practicing	Availability of PA programs	Regulation	Public Awareness	Support a Greater Role for PAs	Certification	Total Score
Alberta	✓			✓	✓		✓✓✓
British Columbia				✓	✓		✓✓
Manitoba	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓✓✓
New Brunswick	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓✓
Newfoundland & Labrador				✓	✓		✓✓
Northwest Territories	✓			✓	✓		✓✓✓
Nova Scotia				✓	✓		✓✓
Ontario	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓✓✓
Prince Edward Island				✓	✓		✓✓
Quebec				✓	✓		✓✓
Saskatchewan				✓	✓		✓✓
Yukon				✓	✓		✓✓

Statistics

- PAs in primary care settings can be used for 75% of all visits without referral to physician level care.
- PAs can manage up to 62% of all patients in emergency care environments.
- In an Ontario study on the utilization of PAs; 95% of physicians working with PAs said that the PA had increased their own efficiency in providing care.
- PAs in emergency departments can reduce wait times by 1.9 times and reduce left without being seen rates by half.
- PAs can increase surgical throughput of primary joint replacements by 42% a year and reduce wait times for surgeries by 14 weeks.
- PAs in long-term care settings have been shown to decrease the hospital admission rates by 38% for seniors.

- Among those Canadians that have received care, more than 75% were satisfied or somewhat satisfied (18%) with the experience.
- 27% of Canadians have a favourable and 38% had a somewhat favourable impression of PAs.
- More than eight in ten Canadians support (56%) or somewhat support (26%) a greater role for PAs.
- 53% of Canadians are comfortable or somewhat comfortable (28%) receiving primary care from a PA under a physician's supervision.

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