



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Ontario PAs Call on Government to go “all in” on Physician Assistants

September 28, 2015, Toronto – Almost one third of the province’s Physician Assistants (PAs) gathered at Queens Park calling on the government to double down on PAs by hiring more PAs in hospitals and emergency rooms, long-term care centres, home care and in primary care centres across the province. Studies across Canada and in Ontario have proven that PAs help provide better, faster and affordable care to patients in every environment they practice in. With almost 300 PAs now practicing in Ontario, patients and providers alike are seeing the benefits that PAs bring to the health system and have expressed a keen interest in its expansion.

“The evidence shows us that more PAs will improve care for patients and save the system money,” said Chris Rhule, President of the Canadian Association of Physicians Assistants (CAPA). “At a time when the government is struggling to save money and looking to find innovative ways to better care for our aging population, it just makes sense to move quickly to ensure we’re taking full advantage of these valuable members of the healthcare team.”

A recent poll conducted by Nanos revealed that 84% of Ontarians would support a greater role for PAs. Not surprisingly seniors were most supportive with 88% of those surveyed indicating they would support a greater role for PAs.

PAs are physician extenders. Working with physicians and alongside other health care professionals, they can improve efficiencies by enhancing the productivity of the physician and augmenting their practice. PAs were introduced in Ontario in 2007 and each year 80 student’s graduate from one of the following three Ontario programs: McMaster University; the Consortium of PA Education and the Canadian Armed Forces Health Services Training Centre. They also practice in New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta and have been practicing in the Canadian Armed Forces for over 50 years providing care to soldiers on the front lines. There are more than 100,000 PAs practicing in the United States. PAs practice in a variety of specialties including long-term care, emergency rooms, primary care, orthopedics, psychiatry and neurosurgery. PAs are in being utilized in other jurisdictions and are maximizing service for patients while helping the healthcare system to reduce spending. PAs can play an instrumental role in seniors care and have been shown to decrease hospital admission rates for seniors by 38%. Furthermore PAs employed as part of a home care program have successfully reduced 30-day readmission rates for patients.”

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“PAs are helping an already stressed health system reduce costs, wait times and improve care,” said Rhule. We’re here to educate government on the value that PAs can provide to patients. Ontario’s PAs are asking the government to demonstrate their support by investing in additional positions in the province. Now is the time to expand the number of PAs in Ontario. Patients would be the big winners, with increased access to care, reduced wait times and improved medical care.

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The media are invited to attend this event and have the opportunity to speak to PAs firsthand about the important role they play in the Ontario health system.

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