



## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

### CANADA NEEDS PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS!

#### Now is time to expand on Physician Assistants in our Healthcare System

**Ottawa, November 27, 2016** – In celebration of National PA Day, Physician Assistants (PAs) are calling on governments across Canada to expand the role of PAs so that Canadians can benefit from better access to care and reduced wait times at a lower cost to the health system.

PAs are currently practicing in most healthcare settings and are improving care and saving the system millions of dollars! A recent report released by the Conference Board of Canada demonstrated substantial cost-saving in utilizing PAs and supported a greater expansion for their role in Canada. “Our analysis found that potential cost savings could be generated by the increased use of PAs across the country in three areas of medical practice: primary care, emergency care services, and orthopaedics. Our results showed that shifting certain physician tasks to PAs could create cost-savings for the healthcare system ranging from \$22 million to more than \$1 billion between 2017 and 2030, depending on the level of PA productivity”, said Thy Dinh, Director of Health Economics and Policy at The Conference Board of Canada.

The Canadian Association of Physician Assistants has published a National Report Card comparing how Canadian provinces are faring in comparison to one and another and are asking provincial governments to support the expansion of their role in their respective health systems.

With its origins in the Canadian Armed Forces, PAs have been working in Canada’s healthcare system for over 50 years. PAs were introduced into Manitoba in 1999, and today they are integral members of healthcare teams in Ontario, New Brunswick and Alberta, with nearly 600 PAs practicing throughout the country. Across Europe, including the UK, Ireland and the Netherlands, governments are investing in PAs. In the US, PAs have been practicing for over 60 years, and are among the fastest growing segments of the healthcare workforce; with over 120,000 PAs practicing in virtually every medical specialty.

Approximately 4.5 million Canadians do not have access to a primary care provider, and most have great difficulty in accessing medical care in a timely manner; PAs are part of the solution. Through a collaborative partnership with supervising physicians, PAs work independently within a multidisciplinary patient-centered model of care. In this role, PAs can diagnose and treat patients in a manner that allows for a better distribution of time and resources within the team.

“PAs are helping to address the health human resource challenges that exist across Canada. PAs are instrumental in improving access to safe high quality medical care and reducing wait times for patients”, said Chris Rhule, National President, the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants. “In many jurisdictions, PAs are the primary point of contact with patients. This allows physicians to increase the number of patients seen and improves access for those Canadians that do not have a primary healthcare provider”, said Rhule.

## 2016 NATIONAL REPORT CARD ON PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT INTEGRATION

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

Province/ Territory	PAs practicing	Training	Licensing	Support for a Greater Role for PAs	Certification	Outlook Positive	Needs Improvement
Alberta	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
British Columbia				✓			X
Manitoba	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
New Brunswick	✓		✓	✓	✓		X
Newfoundland & Labrador				✓			X
Northwest Territories				✓			X
Nova Scotia				✓			X
Ontario	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Prince Edward Island				✓			X
Quebec				✓			X
Saskatchewan				✓			X
Yukon				✓			X

### For more information:

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