



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

QUEBEC NEEDS PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS!

Now is time for Quebec to integrate Physician Assistants into their Healthcare System

Ottawa, April 10, 2017 – “Quebec needs to act now to introduce PAs so that patients can benefit from better access to care, while saving the government money”, said the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants.

PAs are currently practicing in many jurisdictions across Canada and are making a significant impact in 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 showed the value of greater expansion for their role throughout Canada. “Integrating more physician assistants into healthcare teams could help alleviate increased in demand for health services, decrease wait times, and address health workforce shortages. Our analysis 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 Louis Thériault, Vice-President, Public Policy at The Conference Board of Canada.

If PAs are able to relieve more than 30% of physicians’ time in all practice areas, this could represent \$620 million in costs savings for the health care system, with greater integration efficiency gains this savings would be even higher. However, even if PAs are only able to substitute for 25% of physicians’ time, overall cost savings would be realized.

As part of an awareness campaign CAPA has created a [video](#) which describes the PA role and highlights their value in healthcare. 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.

A report from Statistics Canada indicated that approximately 25% of Quebecers do not have access to a regular doctor and most have great difficulty in accessing medical care in a timely manner. In December 2016 the Quebec Health Minister announced a \$100 million investment to reduce emergency crowding and wait times. CAPA applauds the government for their efforts: however, more can be done. PAs must be part of the solution.

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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, CAPA. “In many regions, PAs are the primary point of contact with patients. This allows physicians to increase the number of patients seen and improves access for those that do not have a primary healthcare provider”, said Rhule.

Now is the time to introduce PAs into Quebec. Patients would benefit from increased access to care while saving the healthcare system billions!

For more information:

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