

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS:

Canada's Untapped Health Care Resource



PA's ARE TRUSTED MEDICAL PROVIDERS

Modern medicine is a team sport and physician assistants (PAs) are an essential part of health care teams. Working autonomously under the supervision of a physician, we assess patients, order and interpret tests, make diagnoses, provide treatment, serve as first assist in surgery, and much more.

PAs are advanced practice professionals who are educated in the medical model, which means our training is aligned with how doctors are educated. Our intensive 24-month university program begins with instruction in basic medical sciences and is followed by physician-led clinical rotations in specialties like general surgery, emergency medicine, and family medicine, to name just a few.

To become certified, PAs must graduate from an accredited university program and pass the Canadian Physician Assistant Entry to Practice Certification Exam. We maintain our certification by following a rigorous continuing professional development program.

PAs provide primary, acute, and specialty care in all types of settings, from operating rooms and cancer centres to emergency departments and family physician practices. Versatile and collaborative, we help deliver seamless care in a cost-effective manner and give physicians more time to spend with complex patients.

PA's HELP ADDRESS HALLWAY HEALTH CARE

Canadians are waiting too long for care, often in emergency departments. But for many hospitals, PAs have become integral to decreasing wait times and the workload of doctors, reducing 'leave without being seen' rates, and boosting productivity and morale in the emergency department.

PAs MAKE HEALTH CARE MORE ACCESSIBLE

PAs are essential to addressing the shortage of health care providers, especially in rural areas where the need is more pronounced. In primary care, the addition of a PA can help create more same-day appointments, stabilize access to care, and help create a walk-in environment.

In specialty settings, like orthopaedic surgery or neurosurgery, the addition of a PA to the health care team can help increase the number of patients seen in the clinic and shorten the wait time for a first appointment.

PAs IMPROVE SENIORS CARE AND HOME CARE

Seniors care and home care are crying out for PAs. The evidence is clear—with a full-time PA on staff at a long-term care centre, residents can be assessed sooner and transfers to hospitals or return visits to emergency departments can be reduced or prevented.

In home care, PAs are making regular and urgent visits to homebound seniors. In this important role, they are increasing access to same-day visits, regularly preventing emergency room visits, and improving patients' understanding and management of their chronic illnesses.

PAs SAVE TIME AND MONEY

The Conference Board of Canada reports that if PAs are able to relieve more than 30 per cent of physicians' time in all practice areas, this could represent \$620 million in costs savings for the health care system. With greater integration and efficiency gains, savings would be even higher.

In fact, hiring more PAs and properly integrating them into health care teams could save the Canadian health care system up to \$1 billion from efficiency gains by 2030.

LEARN MORE



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