

# Statistical Profile of Certified Physician Assistants In the U.S.

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## Introduction

Since certifying the first physician assistants (PAs) in 1975, NCCPA has collected data on the PA profession as PAs completed various processes related to obtaining initial certification and then maintaining certification by earning and logging continuing medical education credits and passing recertification examinations. In May 2012, NCCPA's data gathering efforts were significantly enhanced with the launch of the PA Professional Profile. This data gathering instrument is presented to PAs through a secure portal within NCCPA's website. The Profile was launched with two modules: "About Me" and "My Practice."

In December 2012, NCCPA added a "Recently Certified" module delivered online to PAs who have been certified for less than six months. Data from that module can be found in another report (*2013 Statistical Profile of Recently Certified Physician Assistants*) and will be updated yearly.

## Data Editing and Analysis

Data reflected in this poster includes responses from PAs who were certified as of December 31, 2014 and completed at least a portion of the Profile between May 2012 and December 31, 2014. In addition, some data was obtained from other NCCPA data collection strategies. As of December 31, 2014, there were 101,977 certified PAs, and 90,790 provided responses for at least a portion of the PA Professional Profile, yielding an overall response rate of 89.0%.

The data provided has been aggregated from the individual response data provided by PAs through the PA Professional Profile or other NCCPA data gathering efforts. Responses were examined for consistency and potential errors. In cases of obvious error or inconclusive data, the responses were not included in the analysis. The number of responses to individual items varies due to differing response rates or due to the data being removed for reasons previously noted. Analyses of the data consist primarily of descriptive statistics.

## About NCCPA

NCCPA is the only certifying organization for PAs in the United States. Established as a not-for-profit organization in 1974, NCCPA is dedicated to providing certification programs that reflect standards for clinical knowledge, clinical reasoning and other medical skills and professional behaviors required upon entry into practice and throughout the careers of PAs. All U.S. states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories have decided to rely on NCCPA certification as one of the criteria for licensure or regulation of PAs. More than 104,000 physician assistants have been certified by NCCPA since 1975.

For more information about NCCPA, visit our website: <http://bit.ly/2014Pareport>

Table 1 : Highest Degree Completed

Degree	Number	Percent
Certificate program	1,945	2.2%
Associate's degree	1,670	1.8%
Bachelor's degree	23,248	25.6%
Master's degree	41,336	47.4%
PhD	485	0.5%
EdD	51	0.1%
Professional doctorate (e.g., MD, DO, DPM, PsyD)	1,094	1.2%
Other	941	1.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90,790</b>	<b>100%</b>

- The average U.S. PA education program is 26.4 months long. *PIEA Physician Assistant Educational Programs in the United States, Twenty-Ninth Annual Report, 2012-2013.*
- By 2020 All PA programs must confer a graduate degree to be accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). *ARC-PA Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2010 Approved March 2010, updated September 2014



Figure 1: Distribution by Age and Gender

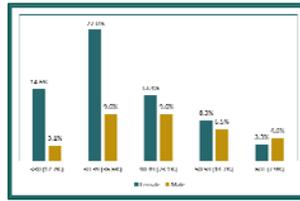


Figure 2: Distribution of PAs by Number of Positions

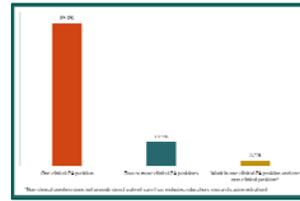


Figure 3 : Distribution of Certified PAs per 100,000 Population

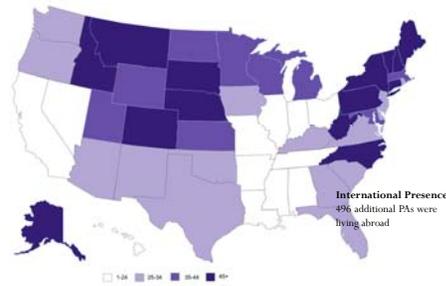


Table 2 : Practice Setting of Certified PAs

Practice Setting	Number	Percent
Office-based private practice	28,088	39.8%
Hospital	26,303	37.3%
Other	4,384	6.2%
Federal government facility/hospital/unit	3,951	5.6%
Community health center	2,417	3.4%
Rural health clinic	1,787	2.5%
Public or community health clinic (non-federally qualified)	1,081	1.5%
Occupational health setting	675	1.0%
School-based or college-based health center or school clinic	646	0.9%
Extended care facility/nursing home	357	0.5%
Behavioral/mental health facility	253	0.4%
Ambulatory surgical center	221	0.3%
Free clinic	167	0.2%
Rehabilitation facility	138	0.2%
Home health care agency	68	0.1%
Hospice	2	<0.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70,538</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

- Average number of hours worked per week for all PAs in their principal clinical position: 40.63
- Average number of patients seen per week for all full-time (40+ hours per week) PAs that see patients in their principal clinical position: 76

Figure 4 : Top PA Practice Areas by Percent

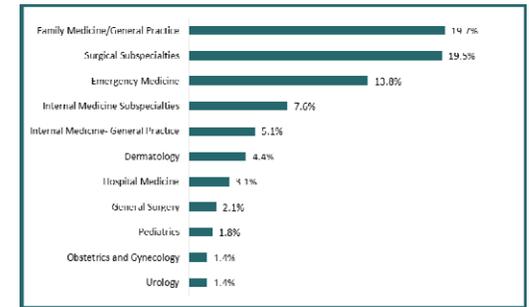


Table 3: Practice Area of Principal Clinical Position

Area of Practice	Number	Percent
Adolescent Medicine	91	0.2%
Anesthesiology	190	0.3%
Critical Care Medicine	659	1.3%
Dermatology	2,729	4.4%
Emergency Medicine	8,465	13.8%
Family Medicine / General Practice	12,072	19.7%
Gynecology	217	0.4%
Hospital Medicine	1,878	3.2%
Internal Medicine- General Practice	3,123	5.2%
Internal Medicine- Subspecialty	4,649	7.4%
Neurology	509	0.8%
Obstetrics and gynecology	835	1.4%
Occupational Medicine	745	1.2%
Ophthalmology	43	0.1%
Otolaryngology	536	0.8%
Pathology	8	<0.1%
Pediatrics	1,095	1.8%
Pediatrics- Subspecialties	598	1.0%
Physical Medicine / Rehabilitation	583	1.0%
Preventive Medicine / Public Health	70	0.1%
Psychiatry	740	1.2%
Radiation Oncology	130	0.2%
Radiology	420	0.7%
Surgeon- General	1,243	2.1%
Surgeon- Subspecialties	11,958	19.5%
Urology	873	1.4%
Other	6,860	11.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61,394</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

26.6% of certified PAs work in primary care (family medicine/general practice, general internal medicine and general pediatrics)

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