

WHAT IS A PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT?

Physician Assistants (PAs) are health care professionals who are graduates of an accredited PA program and who are licensed by the state to practice medicine as delegated by and with the supervision of a physician.

PAs provide a broad, comprehensive range of diagnostic and therapeutic services. Such duties include performing physical examinations, diagnosing, and treating illnesses, ordering and interpreting diagnostic tests, following chronic medical conditions, suturing lacerations, assisting with surgery and making rounds in hospitals.

What does “PA-C” stand for? What does the “C” mean?

PA-C stands for Physician Assistant-Certified. It means that the person who holds the title has met the defined course of study and has undergone testing by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). To maintain the “C” after “PA,” a physician assistant must log 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years and take the recertification exam every six year.

Is a Physician Assistant a Nurse or Medical Assistant?

No, a Physician Assistant is similar to a Nurse Practitioner. Most Physician Assistants have a bachelor’s degree prior to PA school and have completed either a 2 or 3-year master’s program in Physician Assistant Practice (MPAP). PA’s can prescribe medication in forty-eight states, including California.

