

PA Myth Busters

Let's get the facts out there.

MYTH #1

X PAs are the "physician's assistant"

FACT

Not at all. PAs are a key part of the patient-centered healthcare team, licensed to practice medicine, prescribe medication, treat chronic illnesses and assist in surgery in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. PAs have graduate degrees, with an average of 1,700 hours of clinical rotations in outpatient clinics and hospitals after a year of classroom study.



MYTH #2

X Patients won't be happy unless they see a "real doctor"

FACT

Couldn't be less true. 93% of patients who recently interacted with a PA agreed that PAs are trusted healthcare providers.*

*According to a Harris Poll conducted on behalf of AAPA

MYTH #3

X The physician has to be on-site for a PA to see patients

The Doctor Is



FACT

No state requires a physician to be on-site 100% of the time PAs are seeing patients. Collaboration is key—PAs and physicians work together as members of a healthcare team. On average, PAs see 60 patients per week.

MYTH #4

X PAs cannot see new patients or perform consultations

FACT

Not true. PAs can see patients in all settings without a physician present. PAs are critical to enhancing access to care in rural and underserved areas.



MYTH #6

X PAs wear a shorter white coat than a physician

FACT

Completely false. A shorter coat signifies a healthcare provider is in training. When PA students complete their education, they begin their practice with a longer white coat—equal to that of any other clinician.

MYTH #5

X PAs don't add value

FACT

Wrong! Studies show PA-physician teams deliver high-quality care. Results also indicate that PAs enhance care coordination, increase access and elevate health outcomes and that utilizing PAs is cost-effective for health systems.



MYTH #7

X PAs cannot practice in specialties

FACT

Erroneous on all counts! Today, there are more than 115,500 certified PAs practicing medicine, performing consultations and seeing new patients in every medical and surgical subspecialty from pediatric neurosurgery to oncology to primary care.

115,500

The bottom line? With demand for PAs having increased by more than 300% in the past three years, it's no wonder that PAs are the top profession according to multiple sources including U.S. News & World Report, Forbes and Young Invincibles.

Find out more about what PAs do at aapa.org

