



American Academy of
Physician Associates

What are PAs doing in leadership?

A look at responsibilities by role

Noël E. Smith,
Senior Director PA & Industry Research &
Analysis

Sean Kolhoff
Senior Research Analyst

American Academy of PAs

What are PA leadership responsibilities? How may leadership responsibilities change based on PAs' roles?

Background

According to Henry Mintzberg, a management expert, organizations have six staffing areas: operating core, middle line, strategic apex, technostructure, and support staff along and three areas of management: interpersonal, informational, and decisional. Similar organizational structures have been observed within the PA workforce.

Methods

A survey was sent to 29,711 PAs throughout 2022. A total of 4,033 responses were received (95%CL+/- 1.52%). Data on responsibilities and job titles were recoded to align to Mintzberg's framework for management and organizational model. Descriptive analyses and chi-square tests were used to describe the data.

Mintzberg's Management Theory

According to Henry Mintzberg, organizations should have 5 staffing components:
Strategic apex: The people at the top of the company who are responsible for following its mission and empowering others to do so.

Middle line: The managers below the apex convey their objectives and strategies to the workers.

Operating core: The employees who make the products or provide the services.

Technostructure: The employees in larger organizations who analyze productivity, workflow and technology.

Support staff: The employees who provide administrative services for leaders at the apex and the company at large.

Mintzberg's Management Roles

Interpersonal Roles: Managers are used as figureheads, as leaders, and as liaisons.

Informational Roles: Managers monitor the markets, disseminate information, and serve as spokespersons.

Decisional Roles: Managers are taking initiatives and problem solving, handling conflicts, allocating resources, and negotiating.



	Operating core (clinician)	Operating Core (educator)	Middle Line	Strategic Apex	Total
Percent (%)					
Interpersonal Leadership Responsibilities					
Serving as a mentor to other PAs	66.1	95.6	75.3	74.7	69.7
Supervising or managing clinical staff other than PAs	37.9	29.4	48.3	57.0	40.1
Supervising or managing non-clinical staff	34.0	32.4	32.6	63.3	35.6
Supervising or managing PAs	14.9	30.9	76.4	62.0	27.8
Informational Leadership Responsibilities					
Educating others in your practice (not including precepting)	51.8	57.8	75.0	68.6	55.4
Precepting PAs	47.9	34.4	62.5	30.2	47.8
Helping onboard PAs	42.7	43.3	79.3	54.7	47.2
Participation on a committee	35.6	85.6	60.9	93.0	43.7
Ensuring compliance with federal, state and accreditation requirements	17.3	57.8	33.7	73.3	23.9
Performance assessment of PAs	16.0	35.6	61.4	52.3	23.7
Competency assessment of PAs	12.5	45.6	58.2	62.8	21.6
PAs credentialing participation	8.5	17.8	32.1	39.5	13.0
Decisional Leadership Activities					
Leading quality improvement activities	60.6	48.4	70.4	75.0	63.0
Helping to determine how many PAs are hired	40.0	28.1	65.4	60.0	46.0
Hiring and firing of PAs	23.6	26.6	62.3	61.3	35.1
Chairing a committee	24.6	82.8	25.8	77.5	34.7
Managing a budget	11.3	25.0	13.2	68.8	18.4
Serving as a union representative or steward	2.6	6.3	0.0	6.3	2.7

Conclusions

PA roles fit with Mintzberg's Management Theory framework.

Most PAs have some tasks that can be considered leadership.

Leadership responsibilities change based on PAs leadership role.

Future work should examine the competencies needed for PAs to have the greatest success in their leadership endeavors by identifying the

- Pathways into leadership and
- Barriers/supports for those taking on these roles.

References

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For more information, email research@aapa.org