

About PAs

PAs are licensed clinicians who practice medicine in every specialty and setting. Trusted, rigorously educated, and expertly trained healthcare professionals, PAs are dedicated to expanding access to care and transforming health and wellness through patient-centered, team-based medical practice. With over 168,300¹ PAs in the United States providing more than 500 million patient interactions² each year, the effective utilization of PAs can support payers and health plans in meeting patient needs while improving quality care and outcomes for beneficiaries.

PAs are highly educated medical professionals held to demanding standards



PAs complete graduate level medical education programs that include more than 3,000 hours of instruction in medical and clinical sciences, behavioral sciences, pharmacology, and clinical practice experience.



PAs are licensed in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.



PAs in the United States are certified after successfully passing a comprehensive, rigorous examination.

PAs provide high-quality care

Every beneficiary deserves access to high-quality care. Across specialties and clinical settings, PAs provide high-quality care that is comparable to that provided by physicians.^{3,4,5} PA-provided care has lower rates of medical malpractice and adverse outcomes than that of physicians.⁶

Patients are highly satisfied with care provided by PAs

Beneficiaries prioritize receiving high-quality care, irrespective of the title of the health professional who provides that care. PAs have been shown to provide high-quality care, and patients have consistently indicated high-levels of satisfaction with PAs, comparable with care delivered by physicians.⁷ Patients have demonstrated confidence and trust in the PA profession by indicating the type of health professional who provides care is less important than when they obtain access to quality care.⁸

PAs provide cost-effective care

PAs reduce costs to beneficiaries and payers. This cost savings has been shown through minimizing acute care services for complex and costly patients, and other savings.⁹ In certain settings, increased utilization of PAs (and NPs) to fill physician shortages may lead to significant financial savings.¹⁰




PAs bolster access for beneficiaries and help meet access needs resulting from physician shortages

A large number of patients, especially those in underserved settings, rely on PAs for medical care. The presence of PAs in a practice, and their significant contribution to patient care, improves the efficiency of the practice and allows for a broader array of care.¹¹ PAs provide a substantial portion of the cost-effective care that communities require. PAs help meet demand in both primary care and specialties.^{12,13} According to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) approximately half of all Medicare patients receive billable services from a PA (or APRN), and that number continues to grow.¹⁴

| Payer policies for optimal utilization of PAs

PAs are qualified to deliver high-quality, cost-effective care to patients. As such, payers can implement and maintain policies that benefit PAs, payers, and their beneficiaries.

Examples include:

-  Payers should enroll PAs under all offered plans and require that claims for services provided by PAs properly identify the PA as having provided the care.
-  Payers should authorize PAs to practice to the top of their state law scope of practice.
-  Payers should include PAs in provider directories.

These policies support proper attribution and accountability, encourage efficient provision of care to better meet healthcare demands, and promote awareness of care options available to beneficiaries.

| Resources

If you are interested in discussing the information contained in this document and learning how PAs and PA-inclusive policies can support your organization's goals, please contact the AAPA Reimbursement Team at Reimbursementteam@aapa.org.

Learn more about PA reimbursement policies [here](#).

See examples of how PAs practice in various specialties.

- [The Evolution of the Physician Assistant Workforce in Cardiology](#)
- [Commonly Performed Dermatology Patient Services](#)
- [Physician Assistant Management of Pediatric Patients in a General Community Emergency Department](#)