



# Update from NCCPA: Pulling Back the Curtain

***Greg P. Thomas, PA-C Emeritus, MPH***  
***Director of PA Relations***  
***NCCPA***



# Faculty Disclosures

- **Contractor with NCCPA**
- **No other financial relationships to disclose**

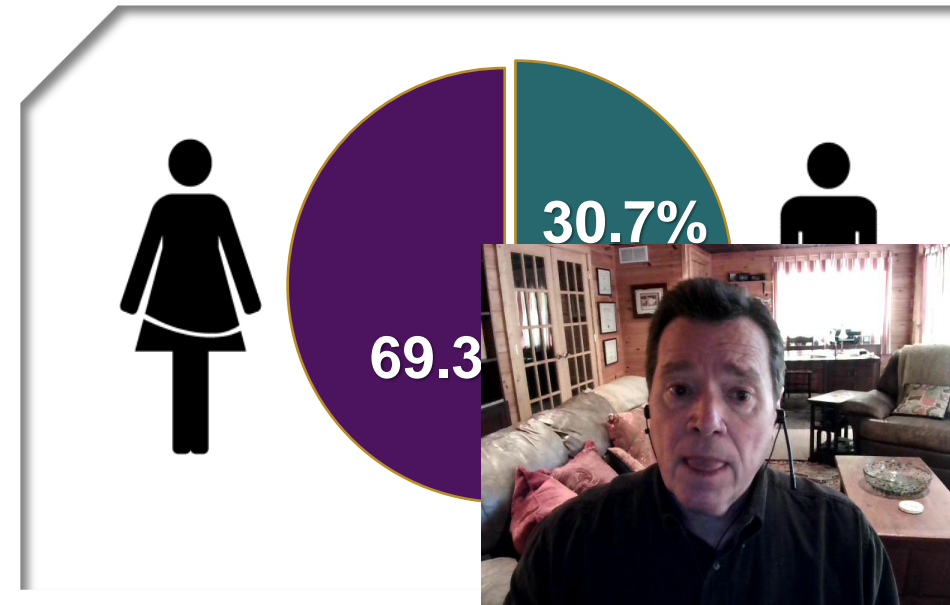




# About Certified PAs



- 148,500+ certified PAs at the end of 2020
- Average starting salary = \$97,668 \*
- Average overall salary = \$113,186 \*
- PAs are a young profession; median age is 38 and 56% are under the age of 40 \*



\* 2019 Statistical Profile of Certified Physician Assistants



**U.S. News and World Report ranked  
Physician Assistant:  
#1 of the 100 Best Jobs in 2021  
#1 of the 100 Best Healthcare Jobs**

**Certified PAs Rank Highly in Today's Work**



# Presentation Outline

- **About NCCPA**
- **Summary of the Pilot Alternative to PANRE**
- **Certificates of Added Qualifications (CAQ)**
- **Disciplinary Policy and Role of NCCPA**
- **NCCPA Supporting Organizations**
- **Staying Informed**



# The NCCPA is . . .

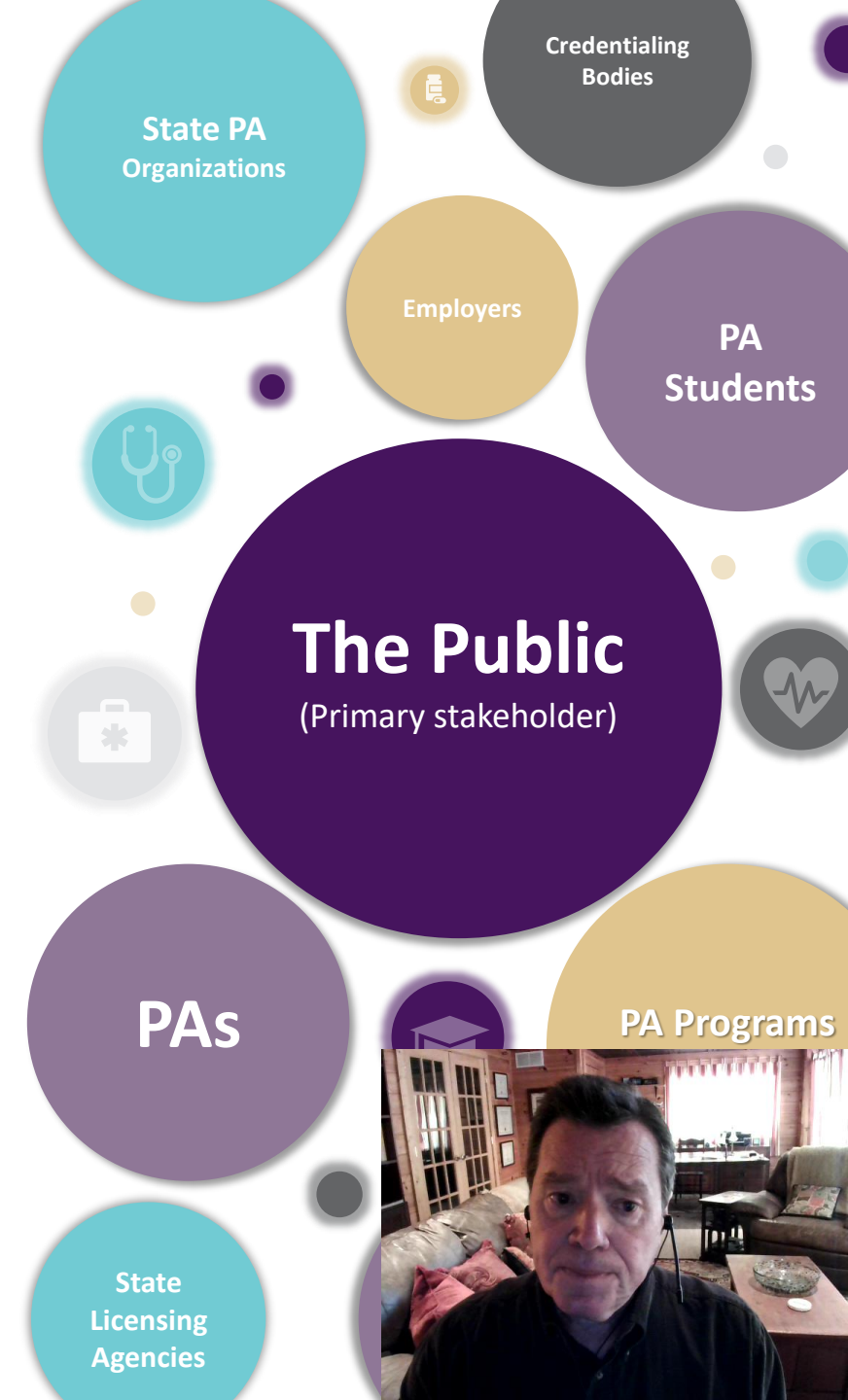
- The only national certifying body for PAs and has been since its inception in 1975
- Accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA)
- Continually exploring strategies to most effectively provide a relevant and meaningful recertification process
- Committed to finding ways to minimize the burden of certification maintenance



**NCC**  
Certification.

# NCCPA Guiding Principles

- NCCPA is dedicated to serving the interest of the public
  - We do so with a passionate belief that certified PAs are essential members of the health care delivery team who provide millions access to more affordable, high quality health care
- We remain committed to the flexibility that PAs have to change specialties during their career and to work in multiple specialties



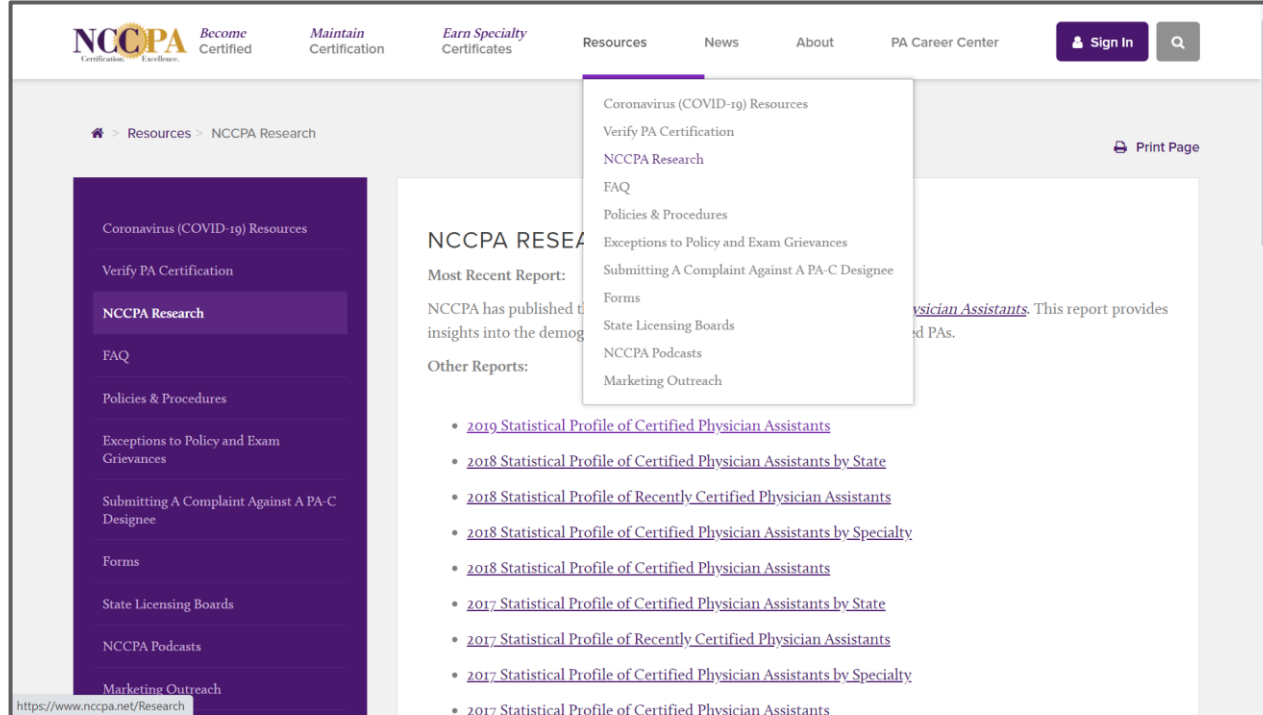
# NCCPA - More than just building exams

- Rely on PA practice data to inform our certification programs
- Publish statistical reports to inform employers, policy makers, the media, patients and others
- Promote qualifications and roles of Certified PAs to various audiences (physicians, employers, state medical boards, public, etc.)
- Explain the rigor and strength of the certification process to many of those same audiences





# NCCPA Research

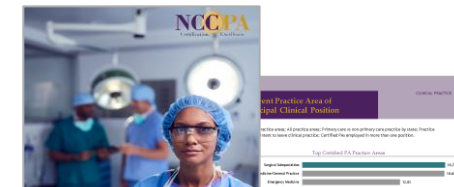


## 2019 Statistical Report of Recently Certified PAs

- Gender, Age, Race and Ethnicity
- Assessment of Job Opportunities
- Plans to Seek Additional Education or Training
- Educational Debt
- Practice Environment and Work Life Balance
- Job Search

## 2019 Statistical Profile of Certified PAs

- Geographic Distribution
- Gender, Age, Race and Ethnicity
- Education (Highest Level Reached)
- Top PA Practice Areas (Principal Clinical Position)
- Practice Setting



# You Can't Spell NCCPA Without PA



**PAs are involved in many important aspects of the NCCPA, and we are passionate about the people of the PA profession.**



1

## Non-Voting Member

NCCPA President/CEO (also a PA-C)

2

## Public Members

5

## Physician Members

Comprised of: 1 MD nominee from AMA; 1 DO nominee from AOA; 3 Physician Directors-at-Large

10

## PA Members

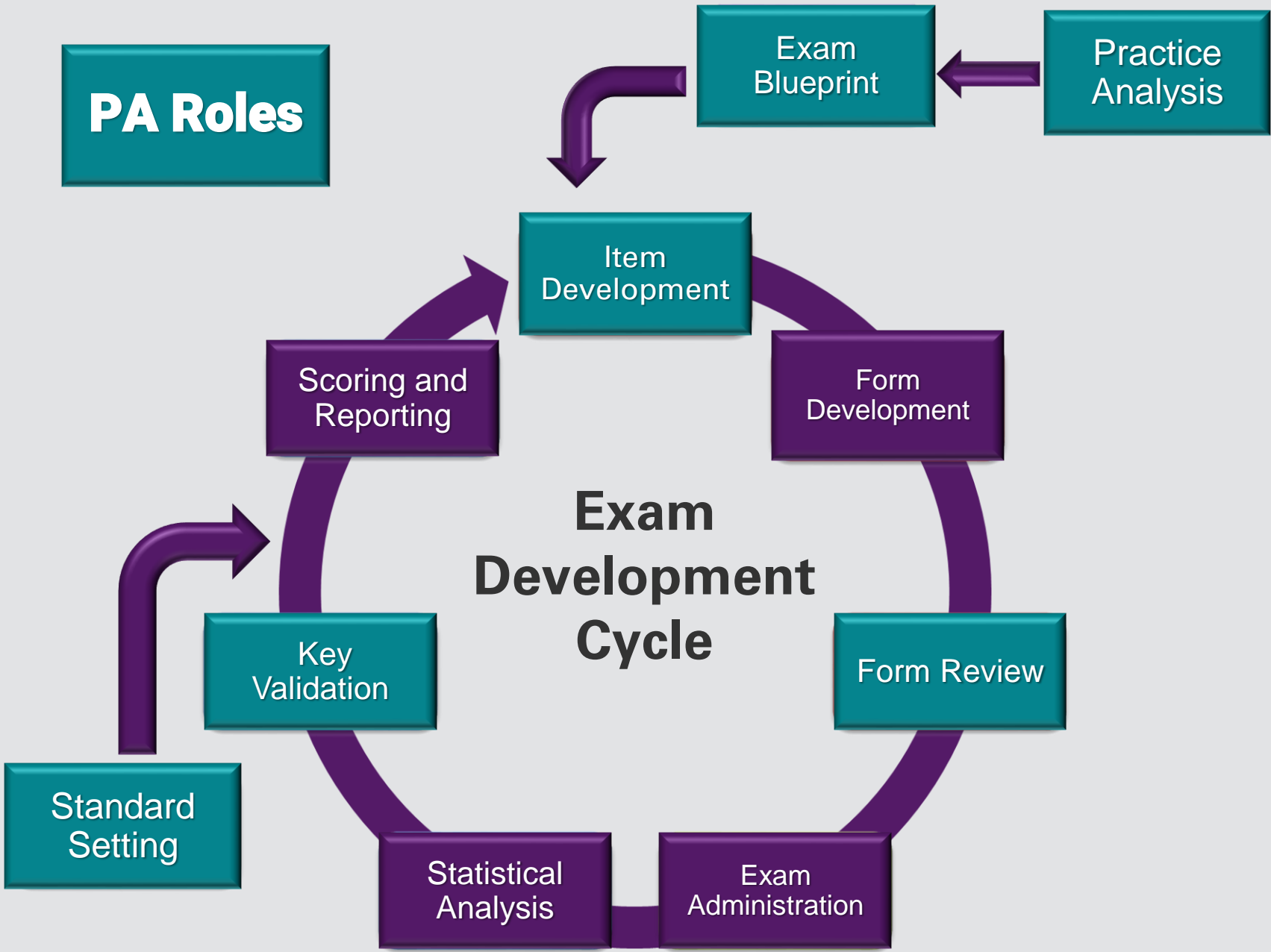
Comprised of: 1 PA nominee from AAPA; 1 PA nominee from PAEA; 1 PA nominee from FSMB; 7 PA Directors-at-Large

## Our Board of Directors

17 Voting Members



# PA Roles



# PA Involvement In The Exam Development Process



# 2019 PA Volunteer Involvement in the Exam Development Process

- **178 PAs served on exam related committees** performing related tasks for the PANCE, PANRE and the CAQ exams
- NCCPA hosted **33 meetings (all staffed with PAs)** to develop and validate exam questions, review exam forms, set passing standards, and explore advancements to the question generation process

Item  
Development

Form  
Review

Standard  
Setting



# NCCPA Carefully Constructs Exam Development Committees

- Clinically practicing
- Reflective of the profession & population
- Diversity in a wide range of demographics:
  - ★ **Practice Setting**
  - ★ **Geographical Location**
  - ★ **Gender**
  - ★ **Ethnicity**
  - ★ **Years in practice**



# Benefits To Volunteering – [volunteer@NCCPA.net](mailto:volunteer@NCCPA.net)



Expenses for travel/hotel accommodations covered

Experience that can be included on a CV, and enhanced personal and professional development



Volunteers play an important role — contributing to quality of the exams administered by NCCPA



Honoraria (\$\$\$) issued after attendance at each meeting



# Presentation Outline

- **About NCCPA**
- **Summary of the Pilot Alternative to PANRE**
- **Certificates of Added Qualifications (CAQ)**
- **Disciplinary Policy and Role of NCCPA**
- **NCCPA Supporting Organizations**
- **Staying Informed**





# Pilot Design

- Longitudinal assessment of core medical knowledge (assessing for learning)
- During each quarter, questions could be answered over time, from any device, anywhere
- Over 18,500 PAs signed up for pilot (almost 60% of those eligible)

<b>2019</b>	Jan - Mar 25 questions	Apr - Jun 25 questions	Jul - Sep 25 questions	Oct - Dec 25 questions
<b>2020</b>	Jan - Mar 25 questions	Apr - Jun 25 questions	Jul - Sep 25 questions	Oct - Dec 25 questions



# Pilot Design

- Time allotment for each question allowed for use of references if desired
- Immediate feedback after answering question with explanations and resources provided
- Some targeted questions allowed for remediation



# Summary of Pilot Findings

- 18,099 PAs completed the process (97.7% of those who signed up)
- 97.5% of PAs successfully passed the Pilot
- Pilot participants were very representative of the overall PA population by geography and specialty of practice
- >100 PAs participated in question writing, developing rationales, standard setting, etc



# Summary of Pilot Findings

- Although participants were given 10-11 weeks to complete each set of 25 questions, 78.3% of PAs completed all questions within one day each quarter
- 90.9% of PAs indicated that topics covered in the questions were a fair representation of “core medical knowledge”
- 93.1% of PAs read the explanation for questions they answered incorrectly
- 85.3% of PAs indicated that targeted questions were beneficial for “learning”
- Very few PAs reported that the pandemic affected their ability to complete Pilot (5.9%)



# What's the Future of the This Alternative to PANRE

- Next large bolus of PAs taking PANRE will be 2024 (early administration in 2023)
- Time to review and analyze the results very carefully
- BOD likely to decide final PANRE alternative by early 2022



# Presentation Outline

- **About NCCPA**
- **Summary of the Pilot Alternative to PANRE**
- **Certificates of Added Qualifications (CAQ)**
- **Disciplinary Policy and Role of NCCPA**
- **NCCPA Supporting Organizations**
- **Staying Informed**



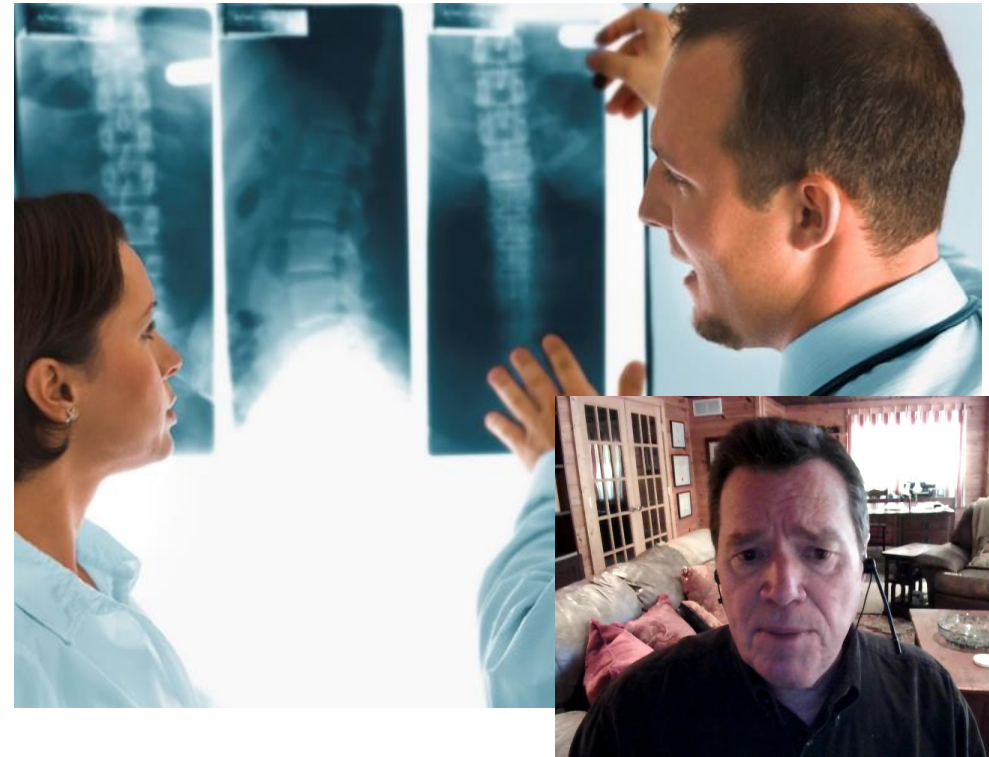
# Key Principles Of The CAQ Program

- NCCPA (and many stakeholders) agree that the **PA-C** must maintain its position as the ***primary credential for all PAs.***
- NCCPA has remained committed to developing a **voluntary** specialty program.
  - A CAQ is not required to maintain NCCPA certification, and we require licensure as a condition of earning a CAQ so that it can not become a requirement for licensure
- The program has been developed to be ***as inclusive as possible*** recognizing the individual differences among and within specialties



# Which Specialties ?

- Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery
- Emergency Medicine
- Hospital Medicine
- Nephrology
- Orthopaedic Surgery
- Pediatrics
- Psychiatry





# CAQ Components

- Prerequisites
  - Unrestricted license from state(s)
  - Current PA-C
- Specialty-related CME (not in addition to certification maintenance CME requirement)
- Experience
- Attestation re specific procedures and/or cases
- Specialty CAQ exam



# CAQ Exams

- 120 questions targeted to certified PAs working in the specialty
- 2-hour exam
- Specialty exams are administered annually nationwide during two time windows at Pearson VUE testing centers (April 5-10 and October 4-9, 2021)
- Cost \$250 plus a \$100 administrative fee paid when you start the CAQ process



# CAQ Numbers (2011 – 2020)

Total = 2,137

- 1,074 in emergency medicine
- 493 in psychiatry
- 228 in orthopaedic surgery
- 176 in hospital medicine
- 71 in pediatrics
- 63 in CVT surgery
- 32 in nephrology



# Presentation Outline

- **About NCCPA**
- **Summary of the Pilot Alternative to PANRE**
- **Certificates of Added Qualifications (CAQ)**
- **Disciplinary Policy and Role of NCCPA**
- **NCCPA Supporting Organizations**
- **Staying Informed**



# Licensure And Certification

## Licensure:

Process by which a governmental authority grants permission to an individual practitioner or health care organization to operate or to engage in an occupation or profession.

Licensure regulations are generally established to ensure that an organization or individual meets minimum standards to protect the interest of the public.

## Certification:

Typically a voluntary process, provided by a private organization for the purpose of providing the public protection on those individuals who have successfully met all requirements for the credential and demonstrated their ability to perform their profession competently.

Represents the achievement of a professional competency agreed international community as qualify practice effectively.



# Review and Appeals Process

## Considers cases involving:

- Requests for exceptions to policy (ETP) which are extensions of certification for additional time to earn/log CME and/or take and pass an exam due to (requires documentation):
  - military obligation
  - death in the family
  - personal or family medical issues
  - other significant and severe extenuating circumstances
- Disciplinary actions
- Complaints



# Disciplinary Policy & Code Of Conduct

- **Outlines principles that all certified or certifying PAs are expected to uphold**
- **Requires that certified or certifying PAs shall:**
  - Protect the integrity of the certification & recertification process
  - Comply with laws, regulations & standards governing professional practice



# Disciplinary Policy & Code Of Conduct

- Certified or certifying PAs may be subject to disciplinary review for matters stemming from:
  - Irregular behavior
  - Fraudulent credentials
  - Legal, regulatory, and credentialing actions
  - Violations of the *Code of Conduct*





# Disciplinary Case Origination

- Self-reports from PAs during exam application and/or certification maintenance process; answering in the affirmative to questions on:
  - **Adverse licensure actions**
  - **Misdemeanors and felonies**
  - **Adjudication of mental incompetence**
- Reports on state board actions provided by the FSMB, individual State Medical Boards (SMB) and/or federal entities
- Individual complaints – these generally occur for irregular behavior (cheating/fraudulent credentials)



# About the Three Background Questions

- Read the instructions carefully
  - For new graduates, only respond affirmatively to incidents that occurred – or incidents that were resolved – **AFTER MATRICULATION INTO A PA PROGRAM**
- Be **HONEST**
- If you are unsure how to answer, call NCCPA and ask
  - Calling to ask is better than just checking “yes” if you’re unsure



# Disciplinary Review Process

- Staff gathers appropriate documentation (e.g. medical board proceedings, licensure status)
- If there is potential for disciplinary sanction, the PA is sent a Notice of Disciplinary Proceeding requesting a written response
- Staff reviews that response and other documentation and issues a Letter of Recommended Decision to the PA regarding the sanction and the appeals process



# Disciplinary Review Process

- **Review Committee** – a committee of the NCCPA Board of Directors considers appeals arising from disciplinary decisions
  - Majority are PAs; includes one or more physicians and a public representative
- The Review Committee may affirm or modify the staff’s recommended decision
- Generally, Review Committee decisions are final
  - A second level of appeal to the Board is only allowed if a procedural violation occurred or if the initial decision appears to have been “arbitrary or capricious”



# Potential Disciplinary Sanctions

- **Not Reportable**
  - Letter of Concern – communiqué between NCCPA and the PA; not reported to anyone else
- **Reportable** – to interested parties (licensing boards, federal entities, employers)
  - Letter of Censure
  - Revocation of Certification
  - Revocation of Eligibility



# Top 12 Take Home Lessons

1. Do NOT prescribe for individuals who are not patients of your practice – NEVER
2. Maintain clear and complete medical records on all your patients
3. If it is important, do it yourself (e.g. licensure/certification paperwork)
4. Always maintain professional relationships with your patients. If you wish to pursue a personal relationship, terminate the professional relationship first then wait



# Top 12 Take Home Lessons

5. Remember that regulators/commissioners are happy to hear your story, but are unlikely to forget you lied
6. Know the law as well as you know clinical medicine; it is just as important
7. Do NOT utilize pre-signed prescriptions; this is an all too common illegal practice
8. Don't let novelty or greed cloud your judgement



# Top 12 Take Home Lessons

9. Your license and certification are more important than a job
10. Social media is best left to your personal life
11. Verify licensure status of your coworkers on the State Medical Board website
12. In summary, live and practice with integrity

*\*Adapted from a presentation given by Ann Davis, PA-C based upon the AAPA's Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the Physician Assistant Profession*





# Avoid Becoming a Statistic of SPAM: Sex / Porn / Addiction / Money



# Presentation Outline

- **About NCCPA**
- **Summary of the Pilot Alternative to PANRE**
- **Certificates of Added Qualifications (CAQ)**
- **Disciplinary Policy and Role of NCCPA**
- **NCCPA Supporting Organizations**
- **Staying Informed**





www.pahx.org

Over 53 years of  
PA history  
waiting to be  
explored via the  
PA History  
Society website!





# Educational Resources

The PA History Society offers 3 resources:

- *Educational Toolkit*
- *Historian Toolkit*
- *Celebration Planner*





# All Things PA History ...



Quarterly newsletter:  
*Historical Happenings*



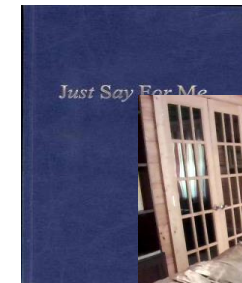
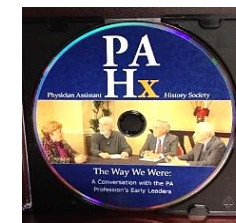
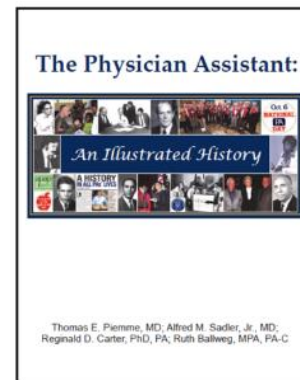
## Posters & Lapel Pins:



## Social Media:



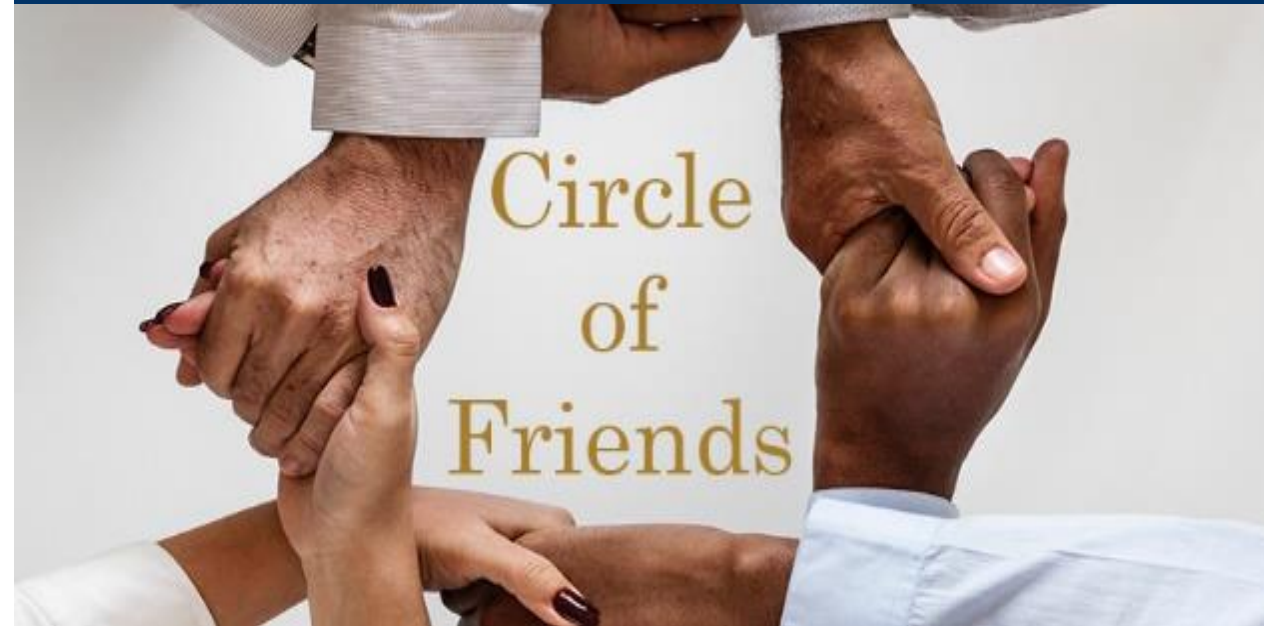
## Educational Resources:





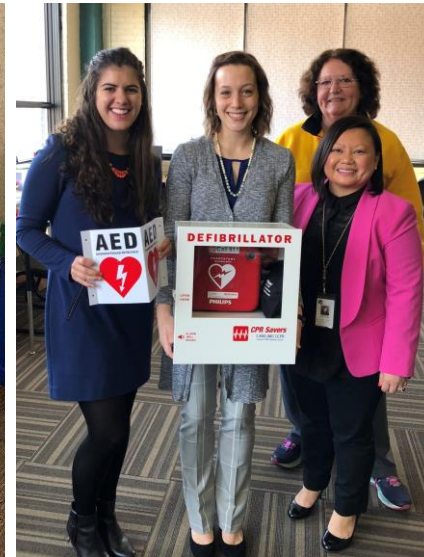
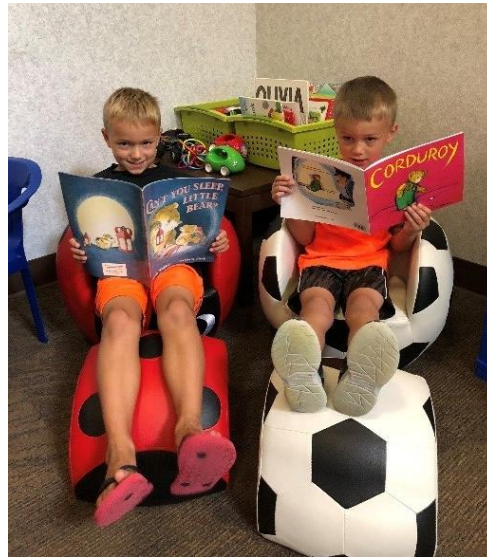
# Become A Friend!

## PA History Society's





- Mission: to advance the role of Certified PAs to improve health
- Focuses on equitable care, oral health and mental health
- Grants are available for PAs making a difference in their community





**107** grant recipients are the change





# Presentation Outline

- **About NCCPA**
- **Summary of the Pilot Alternative to PANRE**
- **Certificates of Added Qualifications (CAQ)**
- **Disciplinary Policy and Role of NCCPA**
- **NCCPA Supporting Organizations**
- **Staying Informed**



# Connecting with Employers

- Search hundreds of jobs for Certified PAs
- Upload your résumé
- Set up alerts for new jobs

Powered by Health eCareers

The screenshot displays a job search interface with a search bar at the top containing 'JOB TITLE, SKILLS, KEYWORD, COMPANY' and 'LOCATION', and a 'FIND JOBS' button. Below the search bar, it shows '716 PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT JOBS | NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CERTIFICATION OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS'. A 'Sort results:' dropdown is set to 'BEST MATCH', with other options being 'DATE', 'JOB TITLE', and 'EMPLOYER'. On the left, there is an 'UPDATE RESULTS' section with filters for 'Job Category' (Physician Assistant (716)), 'Location', 'Date Posted', and 'Visa Waiver'. The main area lists several job openings:

- Physician Assistant** (Today)  
*Nevada Orthopedic & Spine Center is celebrating twenty years of orthopedic excellence by providing quality comprehensive orthopedic care and setting the standard in Southern Nevada.*  
[NEVADA ORTHOPEDIC & SPINE CENTER](#)  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
Orthopaedic - PA
- PA / Primary Care / Occupational Health** (Today)  
*A Physician Assistant is needed for a full scope family practice opportunity in Salinas, CA.*  
[Advanced Practice Solutions, LLC](#)  
Salinas, California  
Occupational Medicine - PA
- Physician Assistant - Internal Medicine** (Today)  
*Ind.PA Spectrum Healthcare Resources has an opportunity for a civilian Physician Assistant-IM at Bremerton Naval Hospital in Bremerton, Washington*  
[Spectrum Healthcare Resources](#)  
Bremerton, Washington  
Internal Medicine - PA
- Physician Assistant - Family Medicine** (Today)  
*Spectrum Primary Care has an opportunity for a civilian Family Medicine Physician Assistant at the Veteran's Affairs Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Alamogordo, New Mexico.*  
[Spectrum Healthcare Resources](#)  
Alamogordo, New Mexico  
Family Medicine - PA
- Family Practice Physician Assistant**

Click "Career Center" Link  
[www.nccpa.net](http://www.nccpa.net)



## NCCPA ON SOCIAL MEDIA



**Facebook** - @NCCPAcert

**YouTube** – NCCPA

**Twitter** - @NCCPAcert

**LinkedIn** – National  
Certification of Physi

**Instagram** – nccpa\_cert



# Alexa PA Skill & Podcasts Too



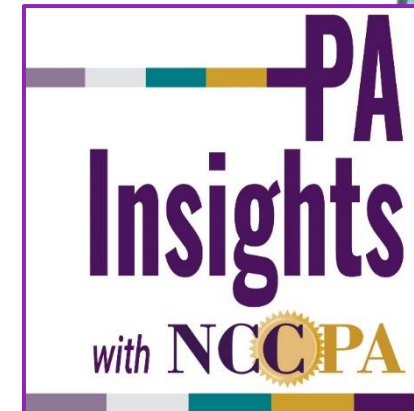
## PA FACTS ALEXA SKILL

### TO ENABLE THE SKILL:

- Say “Alexa, enable physician assistant facts”
- Type a search in the Alexa store for “Physician Assistant (PA) Facts”

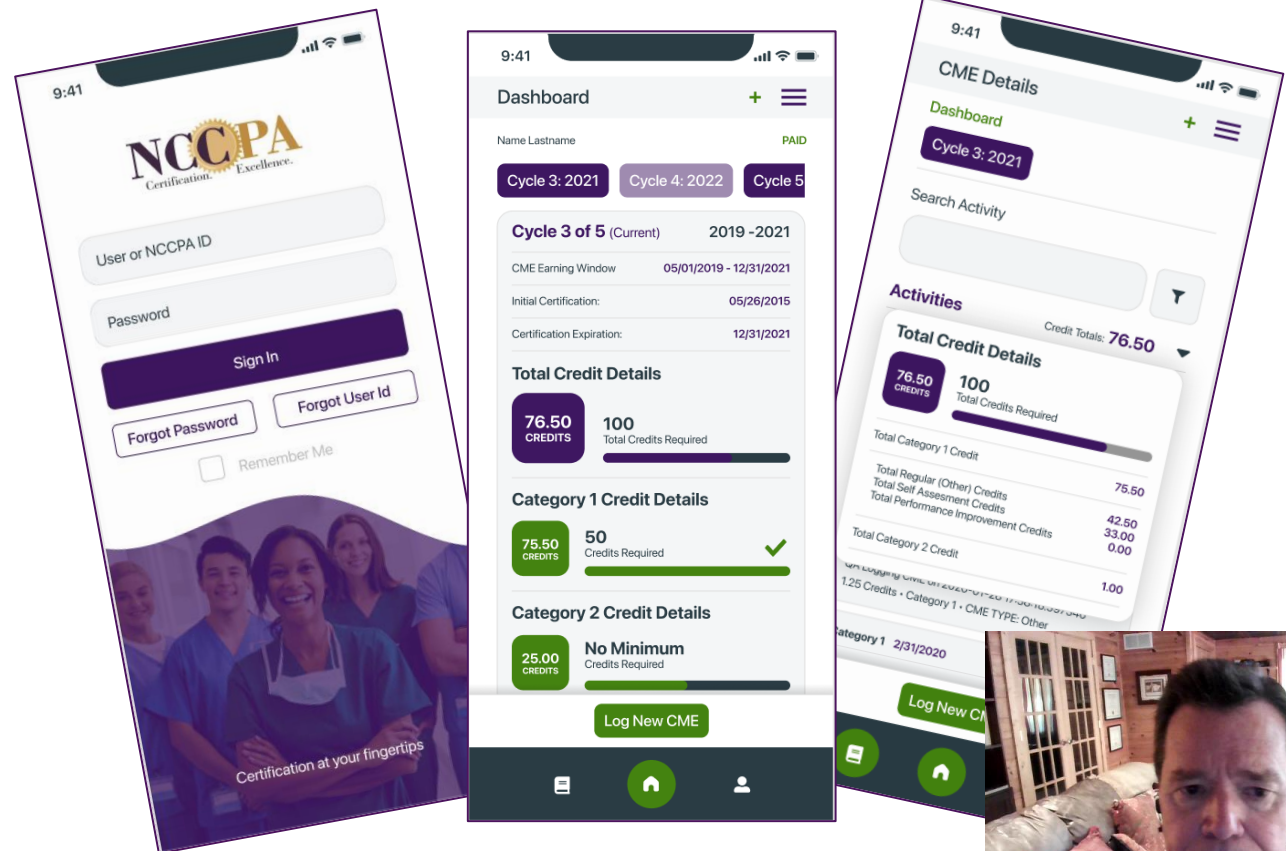
### TO HEAR FACTS ONCE SKILL IS ENABLED:

- Say “Alexa, open PA facts”



# There's an App for That!

- Keep track of your certification status
- Log CME as you earn it
- Update personal data and professional profile



# www.PAsDoThat.net

# An Online Overview of the PA Profession

*Certified PAs Do That!*

Take the Quiz

## Get to Know Certified PAs

Learn more about PAs and how they help to provide over 9.5 million patients like you with high-quality, accessible care each week.



WHAT IS A CERTIFIED PA?

### How do I know that I will receive high-quality care from a Certified PA?

## Ongoing Certification Maintenance



Certified PAs are required to complete **100 hours of continuing medical education (CME)** every two years.

Certified PAs participate in the **Physician Assistant National Recertifying Examination (PANRE)**, a periodic

*Certified PAs Do That!*

Take the Quiz

### Did you know?

<b>Certified PAs</b> diagnose, treat, and manage acute and chronic illnesses.	<b>Collaborate</b> Certified PAs practice medicine collaboratively with physicians on health care teams.
<b>Military Roots</b> The PA profession has military roots. The original three PAs who graduated from the first PA program were ex-Navy corpsmen.	<b>2,000 Hours</b> Certified PAs complete more than 2,000 hours of clinical rotations in PA school.



### Education

Certified PAs are educated at the master's degree level. Before entering PA school, PAs complete a bachelor's degree program, and most are required to have prior health care experience with hands-on patient care. PA programs are typically **27 months**, and PA students must complete at least **2,000 hours** structured clinical education before they graduate.

### License to practice

In order to obtain their license to practice medicine, Certified PAs must graduate from an accredited PA program and pass the **Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE)**. Once they have completed these requirements they can apply for a license with their state's medical board.

State licensure laws authorize PAs to practice medicine either pursuant to a supervision agreement with a physician or in collaboration with a physician.



# QUESTIONS FOR NCCPA?



**Call: 678-417-8100**

Information Service Representatives  
available to answer your questions  
Mon - Fri, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (EST)

**Text: 678-417-8101**

**Email: [nccpa@nccpa.net](mailto:nccpa@nccpa.net)**

Explore our website at:  
**[www.NCCPA.net](http://www.NCCPA.net)**

Check out and share the  
newly re-designed  
**[www.PAsDoThat.com](http://www.PAsDoThat.com)**





# THANK YOU!

**Any questions: [gregt@nccpa.net](mailto:gregt@nccpa.net)**

