



Canadian
Association
of Physician
Assistants

Association
canadienne
des adjoints
au médecin

Surrey Board of Trade Health and Technology

June 15th, 2023

What is a Physician Assistant (PA)?

- Advanced health care professional who work as Physician Extender that can address important challenges in the health care system.
- PAs work under the scope of a supervising physician(s).
- Negotiated autonomy; Provide care under medical directives, to make decisions and take-action at discretion of supervising physician.
- Work collaboratively with health professionals to deliver enhanced level of care for patients.
- **Key Activities:**
Taking histories, physical exams; ordering and interpreting tests; diagnose, prescribe medications; develop treatment plans; patient counseling; preventative health care; assisting in surgery.



Growth of PAs in Canadian Health Care System

- 1950's** Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) established profession to provide full spectrum medical care.
- 1999** Manitoba regulates clinical assistants. In 2009 title amended to Physician Assistant.
- 2006** Pilot project in Ontario allowing PAs to practice as unregulated health professionals. In 2020, Government announces intent to regulate.
- 2009** New Brunswick amends Medical Act to include PAs in health care model.
- 2010** Bylaw passed in Alberta allowing PAs to operate under responsibility of a regulated member. Regulation enacted in 2021.
- 2019** Nova Scotia introduces PAs via pilot in orthopedic surgery. In 2023 government invests to add PAs in primary care and instructs CPSNS to regulate profession.
- 2023** Saskatchewan invests in PAs and introduces legislative change to allow PAs to practice.
Newfoundland and Labrador invests in PA pilot to incorporate into healthcare where needed.
Formalize discussions with Prince Edward Island and Quebec on introducing PAs.



Landscape: Where can we find PAs?

- Over 1000 certified PAs practicing in health care systems across Canada: Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the CAF. Soon they will be practicing in Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec and PEI.
- PAs are becoming essential in primary care, emergency medicine, cancer care, general internal medicine, long-term care, and surgical specialties: orthopaedic, plastic surgery, neurosurgery etc.
- Three university level academic programs in Canada:
 - McMaster University, University of Manitoba, University of Toronto
 - Programs receive over 2500 applicants per year for a combined total of **69 seats**. All programs are highly competitive.
 - Programs to be developed at the University of Calgary (40 seats) and Dalhousie (25 seats)
- PAs are also used around in other OECD countries such as the UK, Netherlands, US, Australia, New Zealand and Germany



Key Messages

- PAs reduce wait times.
- PAs help improve access to care in rural and remote communities.
- PAs help increase access to mental health services.
- PAs can help improve care for seniors in long-term-care.



PAs Improve Value for Money in Health Care

- PAs help gain efficiencies and save money by adding more human resources to primary care teams.

Hiring more physician assistants (PAs) and effectively integrating them into health care teams could save the Canadian health care system millions of dollars in efficiency gains:



Saving physician
time by more than
30%



Increasing
health care
procedures



Requests to Government

- **Regulate PAs** under the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia.
- **Provide health authorities with funding** earmarked to hire 50 PAs over the next three years, at a cost of approximately \$6.5 million.
- Work with physicians, health system leaders, First Nations, and other stakeholders to **identify the specialties where PAs can have the greatest impact.**
- Explore **developing a PA Education Program at UBC or SFU** to begin training homegrown PAs soon.



Some of our Valued Supporters



Would love support from SBOT and join in our advocacy efforts!



Thank you!

For more information or inquiries:

<https://capa-acam.ca/#BCNeedsPAS>

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