**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT**

**What is a Physician Assistant?** A Physician Assistant or PA is a healthcare provider. Our profession started in the 1960s as a response to the shortage of primary care doctors. The first PAs were navy men who were field medics returning to civilian life. As providers we can see patients, perform examinations and procedures. diagnose, and prescribe medications. We are not physicians or physicians "in training" as we do not go to medical school and there is no M.D behind our name. Our ability to practice medicine independently is most similar to Nurse Practitioners.

**How do I become a PA?** PAs are awarded master’s degrees, with the length of the program typically 2-3 years. This means you first have to graduate high school and then attend a university to obtain a bachelor's degree before applying to a PA program.

**Where do PAs work?** You can find PAs working in any specialty or clinic setting. Although the original mission of the profession was to fill a primary care need, PAs work in operating rooms, emergency departments, hospitals, and clinics. We can practice medicine in all 50 states.

**How much money does a PA make?** Salary varies based on state, level of experience, and practice specialty. For 2019, the national median salary was 111,000.

**What to do if interested in a career in healthcare?** For middle and high schoolers, start by asking people you know about their job, and a good place to start is your pediatrician. For high school and above ask to shadow someone for a day, volunteer at a local hospital or clinic. Take the extra AP science class in biology, anatomy, or chemistry. In college, it's helpful to have a major in science such as biology but isn't absolutely necessary. Get a medical certification, such as a CNA or EMT license, and gain valuable experience. Lastly, do your research, there are a ton of options in healthcare and not all require a four-year degree or more.

**Resources**

Affiliate Organizations

National- AAPA, [www.aapa.org](http://www.aapa.org)

Missouri- MOAPA, [www.moapa.org](http://www.moapa.org)

Education- PAEA, [www.paeaonline.org](http://www.paeaonline.org)

PA Life Blog/ Vlog

Blog, [www.thepaplatform.com](http://www.thepaplatform.com)

Blog, [www.bephysicianassitant.com](http://www.bephysicianassitant.com)

Vlog, [www.youtube.com/adannathepa](http://www.youtube.com/adannathepa)

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