

What is a Physician Assistant (PA)?

Physician assistants are health care professionals with Master's degrees who are licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. As part of their comprehensive responsibilities, PAs conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventative health care, assist in surgery, and write prescriptions. Within the physician-PA relationship, physician assistants exercise autonomy in medical decision-making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services.

What does "PA-C" stand for?

The "C" after "PA" indicates that the physician assistant is board certified. This means that the person who holds the title has met the defined course of study and has undergone testing by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). To maintain board certification and the title "PA-C", a physician assistant must complete 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years and take the recertification board exam every six years.