

Testimony in support as amended:

LD 227, "An Act Regarding Health Care in the State"

Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

March 5, 2024

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Laura Harper, I live in Hallowell and I'm a Senior Associate at Moose Ridge Associates. I'm testifying before you today on behalf of my client, the Maine Association of PAs or MEAPA.

In 1977, MEAPA was incorporated as a nonprofit organization to represent PAs employed within the State of Maine. The PA profession originated in the 1960's, at a time when the US was experiencing a progressive shortage of physicians, particularly in primary care. The goal was to rapidly train and deploy safe and competent clinicians, to help address physician shortages and increase access to quality healthcare. Today, UNE, Maine's only PA Program focused on rural primary care, graduates approximately 50 students per year with 70% of them remaining in Maine to practice. There are more than 1,100 PAs practicing in Maine. Per our national affiliate's 2023 Annual Salary Report, 31.4% of Maine PAs work in primary care and 34% of all Maine PAs practice in a rural location. PAs in primary care in particular are essential to expand access to care for Mainers. Many patients in remote locations rely exclusively on PAs to deliver their care where access to physician-delivered primary care ranges from reduced to nonexistent. PAs in Maine and across the country continue to fill the physician shortage gap to this day and function alongside our physician colleagues as leaders in the interdisciplinary healthcare team.

First and foremost, MEAPA wishes to thank this committee for continually recognizing the value PAs bring to Maine and the unique role we as clinicians play in helping to address access to quality and affordability during this time of crisis and turmoil in the healthcare system as a whole. We see ourselves as partners alongside physicians, nurses and all healthcare professionals when it comes to ensuring all Mainers have access to the care they need, when they need it, close to home.

Therefore, it is no surprise that we are in strong support of LD 227 as amended. This bill protects PAs' ability to practice standard-of-care reproductive and gender-affirming healthcare, as Maine law allows, without fear of out-of-state vigilantism. Access to gender-affirming and reproductive healthcare is critical to protect individual's physical and mental well-being, and it is in the best interest of broader public health. These areas of medicine are well within our education and training and scope of practice. PAs across Maine provide this care to our patients in our practices; many of us see first hand how the

criminalization of such procedures and the judgment and shame attached to such laws, impact the emotional and mental health of the people we care for. This bill, while it will provide legal protections for us as medical providers, it also sends an important message to affected Mainers; we see you; you deserve access to this essential healthcare; we've got your back.

MEAPA urges you to vote in support of this bill and the proposed amendment. Thank you for your consideration of our comments and I'm happy to try and answer any questions you may have.



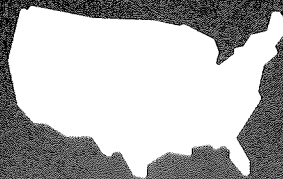
What is a PA?

PAs (physician associates/physician assistants) are licensed clinicians who practice medicine in every specialty and setting. Trusted, rigorously educated and trained healthcare professionals, PAs are dedicated to expanding access to care and transforming health and wellness through patient-centered, team-based medical practice.

AT A GLANCE

PA profession established in

1967 



More than
168,300

PA's in the U.S.

NCCPA, 2023.

PAs have more than

500
MILLION



patient interactions per year

NCCPA, 2022.

All data based on clinically practicing PAs in the U.S.

EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS



303 PA Programs in the U.S.

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), 2023



Programs are **27 months or 3 academic years** (bachelor's degree is required for acceptance)



2,000 hours of clinical rotations



Educated at
MASTER'S DEGREE level

To obtain a license, PAs must:



Graduate from an **accredited PA program**



Pass a **certification exam**

To maintain their certification, PAs must complete:



100 hours of continuing medical education (CME after every two years)

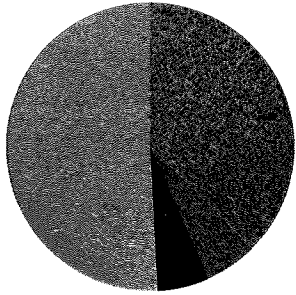


A **recertification exam** every 10 years

CERTIFICATION & LICENSING



PAs practice in every work setting



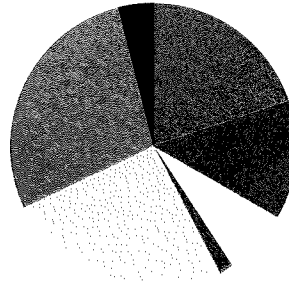
- 50.9% – Outpatient Office or Clinic
- 37.5% – Hospital
- 5.9% – Urgent Care Center
- 13.33% – Other

2022 AAPA Salary Survey,
All data based on clinically practicing PAs in the U.S.

Other refers to a variety of work settings including but not limited to schools/universities, rehabilitation facilities, nursing homes and correctional facilities.



PAs practice medicine in all specialties

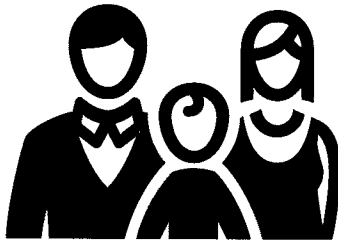


- 28.05% – Surgical Subspecialties
- 25.65% – Other*
- 19.83% – Primary Care
- 13.33% – Internal Medicine Subspecialties
- 7.45% – Emergency Medicine
- 4.04% – No Specialty
- 1.65% – Pediatric Subspecialties

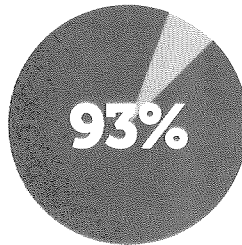
2022 AAPA Salary Survey,
All data based on clinically practicing PAs in the U.S.

Other refers to a variety of healthcare settings including but not limited to psychiatry, hospice and palliative care, obstetrics and gynecology, addiction medicine, pain management, public health and dermatology.

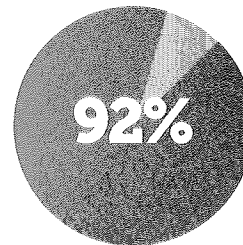
What Patients Say About PAs



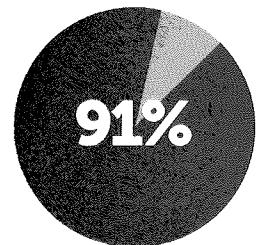
2014 Harris Poll*



PAs are trusted healthcare providers



Having a PA makes it easier to get medical appointments



PAs improve the quality of healthcare

PA Profession in the News

#4

Best 100 Jobs List

U.S. News & World Report 2023

#2

Best Healthcare Jobs List

U.S. News & World Report 2023

#4

Best STEM Jobs List

U.S. News & World Report 2023



American Academy of
Physician Associates

| aapa.org

*"Attitudes Toward PAs: A 2014 Survey by the American Academy of PAs." The Harris online survey was conducted September 15–22, 2014 among 1,544 adults age 18 and older living in the US, including an oversample of 680 adults who have seen a PA and/or have accompanied a loved one to see a PA in the past 12 months. For full methodology visit aapa.org/media.



MEAPA

MAINE ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

- ❖ The Maine Association of Physician Assistants (MEAPA) was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1977.
- ❖ MEAPA is a constituent organization of the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA), meaning we adhere to all provisions of AAPA's bylaws, policies, and upholds the principles, purposes, and philosophy for which AAPA was founded.
- ❖ MEAPA represents Physician Assistants (PAs) employed within the state of Maine.

MEAPA's Mission

- ✓ To establish and maintain a program of continuing education for PAs.
- ✓ To educate the public and other health care workers regarding the role of the PA.
- ✓ To propose and further legislation which affects the evolution of the PA as a health care provider.
- ✓ To provide a forum where PAs can meet and share experiences, concerns, and plan for the future.

Contact Us

Meapa4me@gmail.com

Maine Association of Physician Assistants
PO Box 1103, Westbrook, ME 04098

MainePA.com

MEAPA's Board of Directors are:

- ❖ Clinically practicing PAs from across Maine
- ❖ Active members of AAPA
- ❖ Invested in the future of the PA profession as educators of future PAs and through leadership roles in their healthcare systems
- ❖ Practice in a variety of settings including primary care, urgent/emergency departments, and inpatient medical and surgical environments

Follow Us!



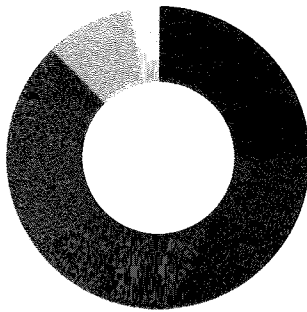
MAINE PA PRACTICE PROFILE

Number of PAs in Maine:
900+

Number of PAs in the U.S.:
159,000

Source: NCCPA

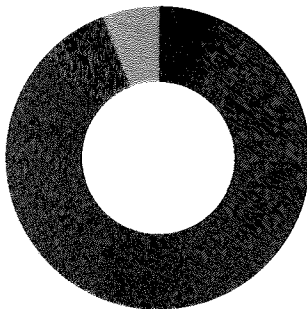
Percent of PAs by Specialty in Maine



- 24.2% Family Medicine
- 21.2% Surgical Subspecialties
- 16.7% Emergency Medicine
- 12.1% All Other Specialties
- 10.6% Urgent Care
- 9.1% Internal Medicine Subspecialties
- 3% General Peds, General Internal Med

27.3% of PAs specialize in Primary Care

Percent of PAs by Setting in Maine



- 45.5% Hospital Settings
- 40.9% Physician Office or Clinic
- 7.6% Urgent Care Center
- 6.1% Other Settings

24.2% of PAs are employed by a Physician Group or Solo Practice

In Maine

- ☐ 35.5% of PAs serve in rural areas
- ☐ A typical PA completes 51 patient visits per week
- ☐ A typical PA is on call 48 hours per month