



MEAPA
MAINE ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

**Testimony in Support as amended by Sponsor's amendment:
LD 353 "An Act Concerning Substance Use Disorder, Treatment, Recovery, Prevention and
Education"**

**Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
January 24, 2024**

Good afternoon Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Laura Harper. I'm a resident of Hallowell and a Senior Associate at Moose Ridge Associates. Today I am testifying on behalf of my client, the Maine Association of Physician Assistants. We are in support of LD 353 as amended by the Sponsor's amendment, "An Act Concerning Substance Use disorder, Treatment, Recovery, Prevention and Education."

Physician Assistants (PAs) in Maine are directly involved with the treatment, recovery, and education of patients affected by substance use disorder. From our busy emergency departments, hospitals and primary care offices, to our detox and substance use programs, substance use disorder has become a common condition faced by Maine patients. For far too long, these patients have been struggling with access to Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT) and continued behavioral treatments. Without these interventions patients are far more likely to face relapse -or worse -death from overdose. Relapse of substance use disorder results in significant individual, family and societal strains. LD 353 will be instrumental in supporting key, data informed interventions of opioid misuse and addiction. Additionally, LD 353 will lead to solutions to expand access to MAT initiation, and other best practices like ensuring there are no gaps in treatment coverage, advising patients on harm reduction practices, and providing take-home naloxone or other overdose-reversing agent to patients and/or family members at the time of discharge.

We urge you to vote "ought to pass as amended" on LD 353, directing the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future to study this critical issue, expand lifesaving education, MAT access and meaningful recovery to Mainers in need.

Thank you, I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.



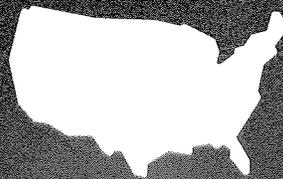
What is a PA?

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

PAs 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



2,000 hours of clinical rotations



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



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)

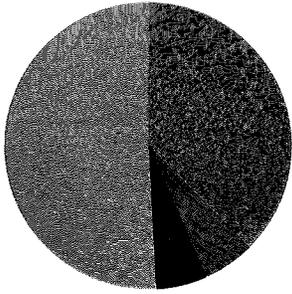


A **recertification exam** every 10 years

CERTIFICATION & LICENSING



PA's practice in every work setting



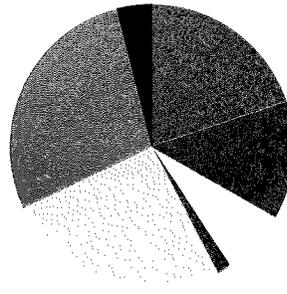
- 50.9% – Outpatient Office or Clinic
- 37.5% – Hospital
- 5.9% – Urgent Care Center
- 13.33% – Other

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.



PA's practice medicine in all specialties

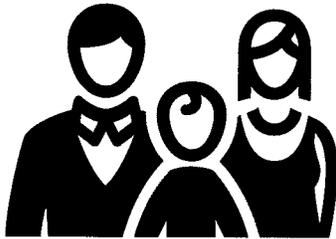


- 28.05% – Surgical Subspecialties
- 25.65% – Other*
- 19.83% – Primary Care
- 13.33% – Internal Medicine Subspecialties
- 7.45% – Emergency Medicine
- 4.04% – No Specialty
- 1.65% – Pediatric Subspecialties

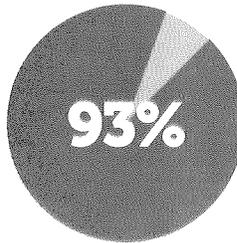
2022 AAPA Salary Survey,
All data based on clinically practicing PAs in the U.S.

*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



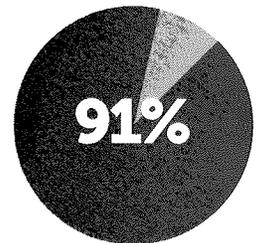
2014 Harris Poll*



93%
PAs are trusted healthcare providers



92%
Having a PA makes it easier to get medical appointments



91%
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!



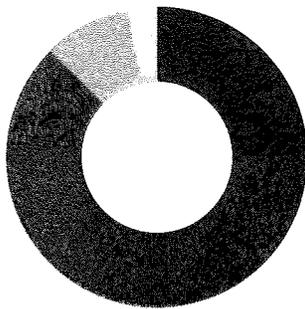
MAINE PA PRACTICE PROFILE

Number of PAs in Maine:
900+

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

Source: NCCPA

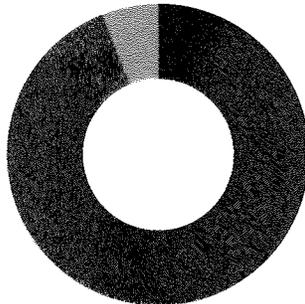
Percent of PAs by Specialty in Maine



- 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