



Testimony of Kathleen D. Moneghan, President, Maine Academy of Physician Associates

In support of LD 1166 “An Act to Change the Professional Title and Identification of Physician Assistants to Physician Associates”.

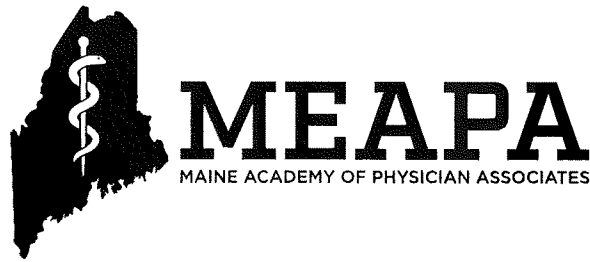
Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Kathleen Moneghan. I am the President of the Maine Academy of Physician Associates (MEAPA), a Dover-Foxcroft resident, and I practice medicine in Occupational Health and Urgent Care. MEAPA is a non-profit organization that represents over 1,000 PAs practicing in Maine and the patients we care for. Today, I am testifying on behalf of MEAPA in support of LD 1166 “An Act to Change the Professional Title and Identification of Physician Assistants to Physician Associates”.

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, there are more than 1,100 PAs practicing in Maine.

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. 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, where they need it.

In May 2021, AAPA’s House of Delegates voted to change the profession’s title after a methodical process that unfolded over the course of three years and was informed by rigorous and substantial research by independent experts. It is important to note that changing the profession’s title does not change what PAs do or impact a PA’s scope of practice, we are merely seeking to align with our national organization. MEAPA has engaged our membership through surveys, town halls, membership meetings, education and clarification with an overwhelming majority in favor of title change which prompted our organizational name change from the Maine Association of Physician Assistants to the Maine Academy of Physician Associates.

Unfortunately, there is a common misconception among patients that PAs only “assist” physicians when in fact we diagnose, treat, and provider high quality medical care. The “physician associate” title more



accurately articulates the role and responsibilities of PAs in continuing to deliver quality healthcare, while reaffirming the commitment to team-based patient care. PA Title Change will help patient to better understand PAs' education, training, and role in healthcare delivery. In fact, 71% of patients surveyed agreed that the title "physician associate" matches the job description of a PA (1).

The value PAs bring to the U.S. healthcare system is undeniable, demonstrated by their frontline service during the COVID-19 pandemic. As highly respected medical professionals, PAs have an essential role in delivering high-quality, team-based healthcare. It is in the best interest of patients and the healthcare system for PAs to hold a professional title that ensures clarity about the work of PAs. We remain united with our healthcare colleagues and providers in a shared mission to provide safe and effective care to all patients and are rooted in our commitment to transforming healthcare in our country through patient-centered, team-based medical practice.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Kathleen Moneghan, DHA, MPAS, PA-C  
President, Maine Academy of Physician Associates

(1) [Title Change - AAPA](#)



# 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



Approximately  
**178,700**  
PAs in the U.S.

NCCPA, 2024

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



**308** PA Programs in the U.S.

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), 2024



**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)

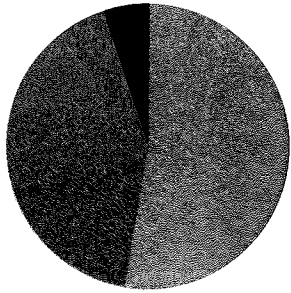


A **recertification exam** every 10 years

## CERTIFICATION & LICENSING



## PAs practice in every work setting



- 50.8% – Outpatient Office or Clinic
- 37.4% – Hospital
- 4.5% – Urgent Care Center
- 2.4% – Other

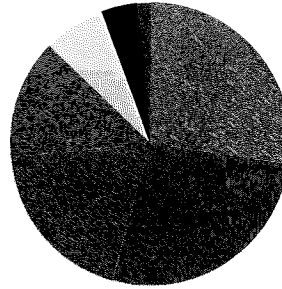
2024 AAPA Salary Survey,

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



- 27.8% – Surgical Subspecialties
- 26.4% – Other\*
- 20.1% – Primary Care
- 13.2% – Internal Medicine Subspecialties
- 7.4% – Emergency Medicine
- 3.4% – No Specialty
- 1.7% – Pediatric Subspecialties

2024 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

## PA Profession in the News



**Best 100 Jobs List**

U.S. News & World Report 2024



**Best Healthcare Jobs List**

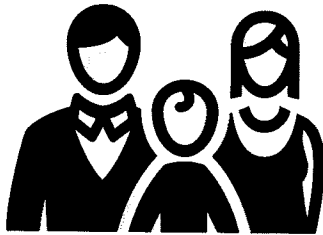
U.S. News & World Report 2024



**Best STEM Jobs List**

U.S. News & World Report 2024

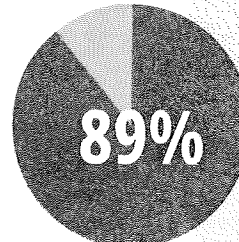
## What Patients Say About PAs



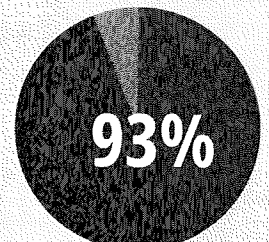
\* 2023 AAPA Harris Poll



Agree PAs are part of the solution to healthcare workforce shortages



Improve health outcomes for patients



PAs add value to healthcare teams



[aapa.org](http://aapa.org)

\*The research was conducted online in the U.S. by The Harris Poll on behalf of AAPA among 2,519 adults age 18+. The survey was conducted from February 23 – March 9, 2023. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.