INTRODUCTIONS

Colleen Schierholtz, BS
  • Director of Admissions, OHSU PA Program

Jess Pethtel, BS
  • Admissions Assistant, OHSU PA Program
Goals for Today’s Session

• Info on Physician Assistant (PA) Profession
• PA as a Future Career Path
• Requirements to Become a PA
• Q&A Opportunity
The Physician Assistant Profession
Ask yourself…

• Do I enjoy helping people?
• Do I enjoy responsibility?
• Do I want to continue to learn?
• Do I want a challenging & rewarding career?
• Do I want to team with physicians?
If you answered YES to these questions, then a career as a physician assistant is definitely worth considering
What is a Physician Assistant?

- Physician Assistants (PAs) are professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision.

- Within the physician/PA relationship, PAs exercise autonomy in medical decision-making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services.

- PAs are qualified by graduation from an accredited PA educational program and certification by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).
Historical Perspective…
the Physician Assistant Profession

• Profession began with the opening of programs in the mid-1960s
  – In response to a shortage and maldistribution of primary care physicians

• As of 2013, over 95,000 PAs in clinical practice
Scope of Practice
Oregon PAs...

- Elicit medical histories & perform physical exams
- Order & interpret diagnostic and laboratory tests
- Establish diagnosis
- Prescribe treatment
- Perform clinical & diagnostic procedures
- Assist/perform surgery
Primary care includes family medicine with and without urgent care, general internal medicine, general pediatrics, and gynecology/obstetrics.
Where PAs Practice

- Hospitals
- Group and multi-specialty practices
- Solo and single specialty practices
- Managed care
- Rural Health Clinics
- Migrant Health Clinics
- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
- Community Health Centers
Future Employment Trends

• The Bureau of Labor Statistics has consistently ranked PA profession as one of the **fastest growing professions** in the country. Projected 38% employment increase expected during 10 year period 2012-2022.

• Forbes Magazine recently ranked Physician Assistant Studies as the best master’s degree for jobs.

• PAs are part of the solution to help ensure access to care for all patient populations. Including the prospects of an aging population (who will need more healthcare services) and the fact that more people are expected to seek care due to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.
PA Licensing

A PA seeking licensure in Oregon must:

- be a graduate of accredited program (ARC-PA)
- pass the Physician Assistant National Certification Exam (PANCE) administered by the NCCPA
- Submit license application to the Oregon Medical Board (OMB)
- Identify supervising physician, negotiate/sign ‘practice agreement’ directly with supervising physician, then submit copy to the OMB
Planning Your Career as a Physician Assistant
What can you do now to prepare for a future as a PA?

• Science and math courses designed to prepare you for college
• Take a health professions exploration course
• Consider volunteering – nursing homes, hospitals, clinics, etc.
• Take a CPR course
What can you do during college to prepare academically?

• Academic Preparation
  ➢ Major – Consider Biology, Psychology, Sciences
  ➢ Take courses in Biology, Chemistry, other Natural Sciences; level of BCP courses
  ➢ Is a Pre-PA curriculum offered? Available at OSU, UofO, PSU, Oregon Community Colleges (PCC, MHCC, Chemeketa)
  ➢ Specific Requirements of PA Programs
  ➢ Health Professions Advisor
  ➢ Health Professions Clubs/Groups
PA schools – Health Care Experience Requirement

• What have you already done?

• Volunteer or Paid Experience

• Direct, ‘Hands-on’ Patient Care or Health Care Related

• How does a prospective applicant gain experience?
What Can You Do Now to Begin Gaining Health Care Experience?

- Health Care Experience
  - Volunteer @ local hospitals, clinics, health events
  - Opportunities to volunteer through the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, Others
  - Plan to gain ‘hands-on’, direct patient care experience during summer and other ‘break’ times
  - Consider obtaining certification
    - First aid, CPR (any age)
    - First Responder (18+ yrs)
    - EMT-B (18+)
    - CNA
Examples of Health Care Experience

• Paramedic
• Emergency Medical Technician
• Certified Nursing Assistant
• Phlebotomist
• Medical Assistant
• Medical Technologist

• OR/Surgery Tech
• ER Tech
• Lab Assistant
• Research Assistant
• Registered Nurse
• Community Health Worker/Peace Corps
• Typically PA applicants, will complete their bachelor’s degree then take a year or two to gain additional health care experience. However, if you begin gaining experience during high school and college, then you’ll be closer to applying soon after college graduation.
Accredited PA Programs

Number of PA programs

Source: PAEA 27th Annual Report
164 programs in 44 states; 35% of all programs are in NY, PA, FL and CA.
Physician Assistant Programs
By Type of Sponsoring Institution

- Programs located at
  - Medical Schools
  - Medical Centers
  - Hospitals
  - Two- and Four-Year Colleges & Universities
  - Interservice Program (military)
PA Profession Exploration

- explorehealthcareers.org
- American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) www.aapa.org
- Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) www.paeaonline.org
- PA Literature – Books, Journals, Publications
  - What are the “hot topics” in the profession
- Shadow Physician Assistants
- OHSU Opportunities
  - Center for Diversity & Inclusion
A Typical Physician Assistant Program
Typical Physician Assistant Program

Curriculum Overview

• 12-month didactic phase

• 14-month clinical phase
Didactic Year Curriculum

• Basic Sciences
  • Gross Anatomy, Imaging & Embryology, Physiology, Neuroanatomy
• Clinical Medicine
  • Physical Examination
  • Lecture Series, Specialties of Medicine
  • Pharmacotherapeutics, Lab Medicine
  • Problem Based Learning
  • Clinical Practicum – “mentoring”
• Behavioral Medicine
Clinical Phase Curriculum

• Inpatient Medicine
• Community Medicine
• Pediatrics
• Women’s Health Care
• Emergency Medicine
• General Surgery

• Preceptorship in Primary Care
• Elective Rotations Reflecting Student’s Interests
Consider the following before selecting a PA program...

- Degree offered
- Curriculum
- Location of rotations
- PANCE results
- Faculty
- Students
- Resources
- Rankings