



Process for Submitting a Complaint Against a Certifying PA or a PA-C Designee

Attaining and maintaining physician assistant certification, as awarded by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), indicates that an individual has successfully met NCCPA eligibility requirements and other established criteria for certification by the NCCPA.

Certification is not a guarantee of initial or continuing competence, ethical behavior, or successful outcomes for individual patients. Nevertheless, NCCPA does expect certifying physician assistants and Physician Assistant-Certified® (PA-C®) designees to uphold the principles outlined in the *Code of Conduct for Certified and Certifying Physician Assistants* and may take action when there is clear and convincing evidence that one or more of those principles have been violated.

NCCPA does not conduct independent investigations into the competence or level of patient care provided by certified PAs. Depending on the nature of the issue, those issues are best reported to and investigated by the PA's employer, legal authorities and/or the state medical licensing board. For reports of Code of Conduct violations that relate to the level of care or of practice competence by a certified PA, NCCPA takes disciplinary action based on prior adjudications or adverse actions by state medical licensing boards, federal employers, or the criminal justice system. The NCCPA receives reports of such actions from state licensing boards and from the Federation of State Medical Boards. In addition, the Code of Conduct requires certified or certifying PAs to report to the NCCPA any adverse regulatory, legal or credentialing action within 30 days of (i) revocation, suspension, surrender, lapse, loss or denial of a license or credential to practice as a health care provider (including authorization to practice as an employee of the federal government or in a jurisdiction not requiring licensure) or (ii) conviction of crime (including a guilty plea or no contest plea). Failure by a PA to timely self-report an adverse regulatory, legal, or credentialing action may in itself result in disciplinary action against the PA by the NCCPA.

NCCPA **does accept** and investigate complaints related to the certification process itself, including breaches of exam security, misrepresentation of NCCPA credentials or certificates, or other forms of fraud committed against the certification process or NCCPA. The NCCPA's *Disciplinary Policy* defines the scope and disciplinary consequences for irregular behavior and/or use of fraudulent credentials by a certifying or certified PA.

NCCPA Complaint Procedure

- All complaints must be submitted to the address below in writing and signed by the complainant. To the extent practical, the complainant should provide details, specific facts and documentation

of the allegations. Additionally, the complainant should provide their contact information, including a phone number and email address.

- The complaint must also include the following statement:

I authorize NCCPA to contact me regarding this complaint, if deemed necessary. I authorize NCCPA to release this complaint and all other supporting material I have provided or may provide in the future to the subject of the complaint, members of NCCPA's Board of Directors, attorneys and others as deemed appropriate by NCCPA or as required by law.

- The NCCPA will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 30 days.
- NCCPA has the sole discretion to determine which complaints should be pursued, how they should be pursued, and what action, if any, should be taken, in accordance with the *Policies and Procedures for PA Disciplinary Matters*.
- The outcome of NCCPA's review of a complaint may or may not be made public.

Please direct any questions to the NCCPA Review and Appeals Department at reviewandappeals@nccpa.net or 678-417-8100.