The 4 National PA Organizations

While they have different roles, each of the 4 key national organizations related to PAs – **ARC-PA, PAEA, NCCPA, and AAPA** – are united in providing resources to support PAs throughout their careers.

Watch this video to learn more about their unique offerings and how they work together to support the profession.



Cross Organizational Collaborative Values

Respect the Mission of Each Organization	Advance the PA Profession	Communicate Transparently	Engage Professionally and with Candor
Collaborate on Shared Goals	Hold Regular Meetings each Quarter	Are Present at Each Organizations Conference	Promote Cross-Organizational Learning

Cross Organizational Meetings

The four organizations' meeting schedule is coordinated each year to align with key organizational events and strategic priorities throughout the calendar year. The host organization for each meeting is responsible for coordinating meeting logistics, agenda planning, and onsite arrangements.

Meetings are typically held in person and in conjunction with organizational annual meetings if possible. There is typically one additional in-person stand-alone meeting each year with a rotating host.

ACCREDITATION REVIEW COMMISSION ON EDUCATION FOR THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

arc-pa.org

Upholding Standards. Protecting the Public. Advancing PA Education.

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) is the recognized accrediting agency for protecting the interests of the public, current and prospective PA learners, and PA profession by defining the standards for PA education and evaluating PA educational programs. The ARC-PA is the only accrediting body authorized to accredit qualified PA educational programs leading to professional credentials. PA Accreditation serves as a process of quality assurance through which educational programs are evaluated to determine whether they meet established standards related to program structure, resources, curriculum, outcomes, and performance. Through this process, ARC-PA promotes educational excellence, supports continuous program improvement, and helps ensure that graduates are prepared to provide safe, effective, patient-centered healthcare.

STANDARDS & ACCREDITATION

- Defines & maintains accreditation standards
- Performs peer review and site visit evaluation
- Evaluates program compliance and quality assurance
- Defines entry-level and postgraduate

PUBLIC PROTECTION & TRUST

- Safeguards public and patient interests
- Ensures quality PA education to ensure quality PA graduates
- Recognized by CHEA & ASPA
- Provides independent, impartial review process

EXCELLENCE & IMPROVEMENT

- Promotes educational innovation
- Promotes continuous self-study and improvement
- Provides guidance for new and existing programs
- Provides transparent program data and information

PA Accreditation — A Rigorous, Peer-Reviewed Process Ensuring Effective PA Education and Outcomes

THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

01 APPLICATION

Programs apply and submit documentation demonstrating compliance with accreditation standards.

02 REVIEW

A team of trained peer reviewers evaluates program structure, resources, curriculum, and outcomes.

03 SITE VISIT

On-site visits validate documentation findings and provide a first-hand assessment of the program.

04 DECISION

The Commission awards accreditation status and sets the next review cycle for ongoing compliance.

ARC-PA BY THE NUMBERS

330

ACCREDITED PA PROGRAMS

17

ACCREDITED POST-GRADUATE PA RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

THE COMMISSION

The Commission meets 4 times per year: January, April, July, and October. The Commission is composed of up to 30 commissioners, with up to 6 physicians, up to 2 public, up to 2 dean commissioners, and 2/3 PA commissioners. Commissioners serve 3-year terms and may be renewed for one additional term.

RECOGNIZED BY: Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) | Association of Specialized & Professional Accreditors (ASPA)

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Connecting, Developing, and Empowering PA Educators

For more than 50 years, the PA Education Association (PAEA) has been the national organization for PA educators and educational programs.

Through community, professional development, research, and advocacy, PAEA helps educators strengthen PA education and prepare the next generation of healthcare providers.

COMMUNITY & BELONGING

PAEA connects educators, leaders, and programs through a shared commitment to excellence in PA education.

- Professional networks
- Communities of interest
- Leadership opportunities
- Shared resources

EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

PAEA provides the learning, tools, and support educators need to thrive throughout their careers.

- Faculty development
- Conferences and events
- Assessment and admissions tools

INFLUENCE & INSIGHT

PAEA advances the future of PA education through advocacy, research, and data-driven leadership.

- Advocacy and policy engagement
- Workforce and education research
- National data and benchmarking
- Emerging trends and insights

PAEA BY THE NUMBERS

320+
PA PROGRAMS

100%
OF PA PROGRAMS ARE PAEA MEMBERS

15,000+
PA GRADUATES ANNUALLY

50 STATES
WITH GRADUATES FROM PAEA MEMBER PROGRAMS

50+ YEARS
ADVANCING PA EDUCATION

PA Education Association
655 K Street NW, Suite 700 | Washington, DC 20001-2385
703-548-5538 | PAEAOnline.org

Our Mission

NCCPA is the only certifying organization for PAs in the United States. Established as a not-for-profit organization in 1974, NCCPA provides certification programs that reflect standards for clinical knowledge, clinical reasoning, and other medical skills and professional behaviors required upon entry into practice and throughout PAs' careers.

NCCPA promotes high-quality patient care in the changing world of medicine through certification and recertification. PAs, patients, and other stakeholders view the PA-C credential as a commitment to evidence-based, equitable, and accessible care. NCCPA is an innovative global leader that is respected for its data-driven decision-making, integrity, and research.

There are more than 200,038 Board Certified PAs that treat over 12 million patients per week!

Board Certification

Initial Certification: PAs must complete the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination® (PANCE) after graduating from an ARC-PA accredited PA program. Achieving certification is a requirement for PA licensure in all U.S. States.

Recertification: 97% of PAs maintain their certification throughout their career. Board Certified PAs must submit 100 Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits every 2 years and pass a recertifying exam, the Physician Assistant National Recertifying Exam® (PANRE) or the Physician Assistant National Recertifying Exam-Longitudinal Assessment® (PANRE-LA), every 10 years.

Certificates of Added Qualification: NCCPA offers voluntary Certificates of Added Qualifications (CAQs) to Board Certified PAs in 12 specialty areas of medicine. Emergency Medicine and Psychiatry CAQs are the most popular among PAs. Geriatric Medicine is the newest CAQ and will be available in September 2026. CAQs in Addiction Medicine and Oncology are in development.

NCCPA Research and Communications

NCCPA has the most comprehensive data on Board Certified PA demographics and practice characteristics. NCCPA publishes 4 reports annually on PAs by state, specialty, and recent certification, as well as a general report. NCCPA published 11 peer-reviewed manuscripts in 2025. Drawing on its rich data source, NCCPA communicates with stakeholders through websites, newsletters, podcasts, social media, outreach activities, and presentations. The REPRESENT! NCCPA Summit® is held biennially to gather leaders committed to increasing the representation of historically underserved groups within the PA profession.

Leadership

NCCPA is a PA-governed organization. The NCCPA Board of Directors comprises 11 PAs, 5 physicians, and 2 public members and meets 4 times per year. Dawn Morton-Rias, PA-C, Ed. D., ICE-CCP, FACHE serves as President and CEO.

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FACT SHEET

American Academy of Physician Associates

1968
Founded

200,000+
PAs Represented

50 States
+ D.C. & Territories

MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Mission: Empower PAs to advance the profession and elevate healthcare.

Vision: PAs transforming health through patient-centered care.

Leadership | Excellence | Advocacy | Compassion | Equity

AAPA is the national membership organization for all physician associates, advancing advocacy, education, professional growth, and patient-centered healthcare.

CONSTITUENT ORGANIZATIONS

- State & Federal Service Chapters
- Specialty Organizations
- Special Interest Groups
- Caucuses

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

- Board of Directors
- House of Delegates
- Annual Elections
- Volunteer Engagement