

## PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (PA)

**Licensing Authority** Jan Scheffert  
Physician Assistant Examiners  
Professional Licensure Bureau  
Iowa Department of Public Health  
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**Legal Authority** Code of Iowa, Chapter 148C; Iowa Administrative Code, Chapters 325-330

**Job Description** Physician assistants provide medical services as delegated by an approved supervising physician; take medical histories; perform physical exams on patients of all ages; assess, diagnose and treat medical or surgical problems as delegated by a supervising physician; perform therapeutic procedures and office surgical procedures; may assist in surgery; may provide prenatal and postnatal care and assist the physician in obstetrical care; may counsel patients concerning diets, therapy, health promotion and disease prevention; may make hospital rounds or provide hospital or nursing home medical services; may provide immediate evaluation and treatment in response to emergency medical problems; may refer a patient to specialty physicians; may order and interpret laboratory tests, x-rays, diets, physical therapy, inhalation therapy or other services when delegated by a supervising physician; may order certain medications with the prior approval and direction of a supervising physician and may prescribe medications and medical devices as delegated by a supervising physician in accordance with Iowa Administrative Code 645- 325.7; may assist a supervising physician in the office management and direction of other medical personnel in the execution of patient care.

PAs may provide medical services in a remote medical clinic as long as they have at least one year of clinical experience as a practicing PA and documents showing sufficient training and experience. A remote medical clinic is one that is away from the regular practice location of a supervising physician and in which a supervising physician is present less than 50 percent of the time the clinic is open. A physician assistant may perform any medical task that is: 1) delegated by a supervising physician, 2) within the qualifications of the PA, and 3) not prohibited by the law or the Board.

Physician assistant services may be utilized in any clinical setting, in nursing homes, patient homes, or extended care facilities.

**Education & Experience** An applicant must be a graduate from an educational program for the instruction of a physician assistant that meets the essential requirements and criteria

**Required** established by the Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation or the Council on Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs or their successor programs.

Temporary registration is issued for one year and may be renewed at the discretion of the board. Upon notification of the physician assistant passing the national exam, the temporary registration is converted to regular registration at no additional cost. A PA may apply for an Iowa license to work with a specified supervising physician or group of physicians by first registering with the Board and providing a description of the practice and a plan of supervision by the supervising physician(s).

Prior to passing the national exam, a PA may apply for temporary licensure if he/she has a practice location. If the applicant does not have a practice location, he/she can apply for either permanent or temporary registration, depending on if the applicant has or has not passed the national exam. Applicants must take and pass the national exam within the one-year period. The fee for temporary licensure is the same fee as full licensure, and is issued for one year. Temporary licensure may be renewed for one year at the discretion of the Board. The Iowa PA license is renewed every two years. A PA working under a temporary license is prohibited from working in clinics that are remote from the supervising physician's practice.

**Continuing Education** One hundred certified medical hours, 40 of which must be Category I continuing education OR proof of a current National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) certificate are required every two years for license renewal. A PA may take a national recertification examination, which is given every six years by the NCCPA, but the exam is not required to maintain the Iowa license or registration.

**Examination** A PA program graduate must pass a written and practical exam given by NCCPA at over 300 Sylvan Technology Centers testing sites across the United States.

A new PA graduate may submit his/her educational credentials prior to taking the national exam or receiving test scores and be granted temporary registration.

**Fees** Application: \$100 – Permanent or Temporary  
\$150 – License and registration (permanent or temporary)  
Duration: One year – initial; Two years – thereafter  
Renewal: \$100 – License and registration  
Exam: \$425 – NCCPA test, arranged by applicant through the school  
\$50 – Registration only (Permanent or Temporary)  
\$5 – Registration renewal only

**SOC Code, Title, & Avg. Hourly Wage** 29-1071 – Physician Assistants (\$29.42)

**Number of Licenses Issued**    Total number of licenses active as of December 31,  
2002: 590  
2001: 612  
2000: 583

**For Additional Information**    Iowa Department of Public Health Web site:  
<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/licensure>

American Academy of Physician Assistants  
950 N Washington St  
Alexandria VA 22314  
(703) 836-2272  
<http://www.aapa.org>

Board of Physician Assistant Examiners  
Iowa Department of Public Health  
Lucas State Office Bldg  
Des Moines IA 50319-0075  
(515) 281-4408  
<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/licensure> (Board of Physician Assistants)

National Commission of Certification of Physician Assistants Inc  
157 Technology Pkwy Ste 800  
Norcross GA 30092-2913  
(770) 734-4500  
<http://www.nccpa.net>