

A COMPARISON OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS AND NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Physician Assistant	Nurse Practitioner
<p>Definition: An academically prepared generalist who practices medicine within a defined scope of practice authorized by licensed physicians providing medical care that extends a physician's services within a formalized physician supervised practice arrangement.</p>	<p>Registered Nurses with advanced education and training in a clinical specialty who perform legislated nursing services independently, and delegated medical acts with physician supervision.</p>
<p>Philosophy: Medical/physician model, patient centered approach, with emphasis on the biological/pathologic aspects of health, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment. Practice model is a team approach and formalized practice relationship with physicians.</p>	<p>Medical/Nursing model using a Biopsychosocial centered, with emphasis on disease adaptation, health promotion, wellness, treatment, and prevention. Practice model is independent profession with a collaborative relationship with physicians and other health care providers.</p>
<p>Education: Affiliated with Medical Programs Previous health care experience recommended or higher educational qualifications obtained; Many have bachelors' degree and a growing percentage hold Graduate degrees on acceptance to a program. PA Medical Education curriculum is advanced medical sciences and clinical medicine with 46-48 weeks of didactic material (average 60 Credits), and over 52 weeks of clinical clerkship hours required. All PAs are trained as generalists in a primary care medical model and some receive post-graduate specialty training. A Canadian National Competency Profile defines procedural and skill components with emphasis on diagnosis, treatment, surgical skills, and patient education requirements following the CANMEDS format. >90% of American programs award Masters degrees and all are currently in transition to the master's level.</p>	<p>Affiliated with Nursing Programs BSN is prerequisite and 2000 - 4000 clinical hours post Nursing degree (although programs vary between provinces); curriculum is bio-psychosocial based upon behavioral, natural, and humanistic sciences. NPs choose a specialty training track in adult, acute care, pediatric, women's health or gerontology. A minimum 1500 didactic and a minimum of 700 clinical practice hours while in a NP program of study (ranges 700 – 980 depending on the program) with an emphasis on patient education, diagnosis, treatment and prevention. Settings include acute care adult, anesthesiology, cardiology, neonatal, nephrology, and population based programs where students may bring that experience from their nursing background to tailor the degree.</p>
<p>Certification/Licensure/Recertification Independent National accreditation and certification bodies for PA Education Programs. Entry to Practice Requires successful completion of a Canadian Medical Association accredited program and the Canadian Physician Assistant Certification Examinations or American national certification exam. Recertification CCPA maintenance in Canada requires 250 hours over 5 years with tracking of Professional Development using the College of Family Physicians of Canada mechanism.</p>	<p>Provincial responsibility for Nursing accreditation and Licensing. The NP does not require a Masters in all Provinces; however graduate credentials and education are the accepted professional standards. Qualification Examination is approved by provincial regulators who also approve the applicants. NP's practice under NP licensure within the Provincial Registered Nurse Practice Acts, Extended Practice Regulation.</p>
<p>Scope of Practice The supervising physician has relatively broad discretion in delegating medical tasks within his/her scope of practice to the PA in accordance with provincial regulations. Formal guidelines or directives are required. PA Role does not require on-site supervision but communication access to the supervisor is required</p>	<p>Extended Practice or Advanced Nursing is provided as a legislated function; protocols, written or verbal orders are required for some delegated medical acts may require Physician supervision. Each Province has modifications to the degree of independent practice and scope of practice authorized.</p>
<p>References http://academic.son.wisc.edu/wistrec www.wapa.org www.aapa.org www.capa-acam.ca www.ana.org http://www.crnmb.ca/applicants-nprn-requirements.php http://caapn.com/</p>	