

Career Profile PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

What is a Physician Assistant? – Career Description/Scope

A Physician Assistant (PA) is an unregulated health care professional who works under delegation of a supervising licensed Physician through medical directives or direct orders. The Physician retains overall responsibility for direction of the PA's activities and accountability for healthcare delivered. PA's can be entrusted to make certain decisions and to take certain actions autonomously at the discretion of the supervising physician.

Education Requirements to Work in Ontario

Admission Requirements:

- Minimum entry requirement is two years of university education

Program Specifics:

- 24 month continuous education program
- Curriculum is advanced science based material with 11 month of didactic and over 2000 clinical clerkship hours covered in clinical placements
- Graduate with a Bachelor of Health Sciences Physician Assistant degree
- Graduates have the skills and competencies necessary to meet Canadian standards set by Canadian Association of Physician Assistants (CAPA) and are eligible to take the National Certification Examination

Physician Assistant Practice Requirements

- Entry to Practice
 - National certification exam: The Physician Assistant Certification Council of Canada (PACCC) administers and maintains the PA certification process and ensures that the PA meets the standard set out in the National Competency Profile for the profession
 - Registered with the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants
- Ongoing
 - Registered with the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants
 - Minimum of 25 Continuing Professional Development credits per year during each five-year cycle – tracked by the College of Family Physicians of Canada

How does a Physician Assistant Practice at TBRHSC?

- PAs work under the supervision of licensed Physicians through medical directives as well as through direct orders
- The activities of the PA are at all times subject to:
 - The direction of the supervising physician
 - Relevant government legislation and regulations
 - College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario policy – Delegation of Controlled Acts
 - The policies of the PA's employer

What does a Physician Assistant Do?

- The specific duties of the PA vary, depending on the individual competencies of the PA, the supervising physician's area of practice, and the types of duties that the supervising physician chooses to assign.
 - Medical histories and performing comprehensive physical examinations
 - Complete admission and discharge procedures for hospital stays
 - Refer patients for consultation with specialists
 - Assist the Physician in developing and implementing a patient management plan (order lab test, imaging, medications, intravenous fluids and interpret results)
 - Record progress notes in isolated and in-patient care settings
 - Perform and interpret common laboratory, radiological, ECG, and other diagnostic procedures used to identify patho-physiological processes
 - Surgical Assist in Operating Room, setting a cast on a fractured bone or dislocated joint
 - Perform certain controlled acts delegated to them by a Physician (such as wound debridement, suturing, paracentesis, lumbar puncture, etc.)
 - Provide counseling on preventive health care
 - May include getting consents and communicating diagnosis

Web Resources

- Health Force Ontario (HFO)
www.healthforceontario.ca/en/M4/Ontario's_Physician_Assistant_Initiative
- Canadian Association of Physician Assistants (CAPA) www.capa-acam.ca
- College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) www.cfpc.ca/Home
- Ontario Physician Assistant Scope of Practice Statement and Ontario Physician Assistant Competency Profile www.healthforceontario.ca/UserFiles/file/AHP/Inside/PA-role-april-2007-en.pdf
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO)'s policy on Delegation of Controlled Acts www.cpso.on.ca/policies-publications/policy/delegation-of-controlled-acts