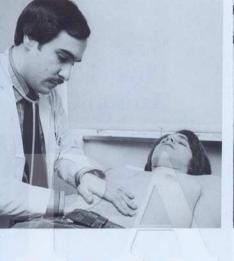
# What Is a Physician Assistant?





The New York State Society of Physician Assistants



## What Is a Physician Assistant?

A Physician Assistant (P.A.) is a specially-trained health professional who works under the supervision of your doctor. This relationship enables the doctor and the P.A. to use their time and training most effectively and efficiently to provide you with comprehensive and personalized health care. The concept of the Physician Assistant was developed in an effort to help meet the needs of millions of Americans who live in areas lacking adequate medical services. It is a team concept; the Physician Assistant and the doctor work together to provide better medical care for more people.

## How and Where Are Physician Assistants Trained?

The first Physician Assistant training program was started in 1965 at Duke University in North Carolina. The first program in New York State began in 1970 at Brooklyn-Cumberland Hospital, which is affiliated with Long Island University. There are currently seven P.A. programs in New



York State and 50 throughout the country operating in medical schools, universities, and colleges. Each of these programs is accredited by the Council on Allied Health Education and Accreditation of the American Medical Association. Together, the programs graduate approximately 1,500 Physician Assistants every year. Approximately 150, or 10% of all annual graduates are trained in New York State programs.

# What Kind of Training Does a Physician Assistant Receive?

Most Physician Assistant programs are two years in length. During this time, a student undergoes rigorous training in a broad curriculum of health care sciences geared to primary health care. Courses are followed by one year of working with patients in a clinical setting.

P.A. training does not stop at graduation. The National Board of Medical Examiners has developed a P.A. certification examination. It is administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants. In order to maintain



this certification, a Physician Assistant must complete 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years.

## What Can a Physician Assistant Do?

The P.A. works with the doctor and other health professionals in a team approach emphasizing preventive and comprehensive medical care, P.A.s work in primary care as well as in a variety of medical and surgical areas. The Physician Assistant takes patient medical histories, performs physical examinations, and orders laboratory and other diagnostic tests.

The Physician Assistant may also diagnose and treat common medical problems and initiate emergency treatment. The P.A. also writes medical orders and prescribes medication and treatments. The doctor does not need to be physically present when the P.A. provides these services. However, the P.A. always works under the supervision of the physician who retains overall responsibility for the patient's care.

### Where Do Physician Assistants

Physician Assistants are currently employed suspituli, clinics, private offices, prepaid heal saintenance organizations (HMOs), and ind Many P.A.s are practicing in neess of acute or real need, such artisons city and sparsely nor real need.

#### Why Are Physician Assistants Important to You?

When you note health care, a fftypician Assistant ordering with your doctor, can help you to be seen usen, thereby decreasing your waiting room time, and keeping your beadly our-cost show. These is the increased medical staffing, you are precided the health education and counseling to help you anderstand your health care medis.

## How Can You Find Out More

#### The New York Star

he New York State: Society of Physician, Assisuse (NYSSPA) was incorporated in 1975 as the referenced organization representing P.A.s in low York State. NYSSPA is a constituent chapter the Agrerican Academy of Physician Assistants AAPA.

fou may contact the NYSSPA at:

