

Physician's Assistant Training Program
Duke University Medical Center
Durham, North Carolina

General Description:

The Physician's Assistant training program has been designed by the Department of Medicine of the Duke University Medical Center, and is sponsored in part by a grant from the National Institutes of Health. The program calls for the training of a new member of the health team, who will complement existing personnel in meeting the ever increasing need for talented and skilled individuals to assist in the care of sick patients.

The objectives of the training program are to teach excellence in the performance of practical aspects of patient care and to provide the fundamental knowledge necessary for continued intellectual growth and development of additional skills. The trainee will learn the general principles of body structure function and behavior in the normal and diseased state. He will develop skills in performing certain laboratory and diagnostic tests, in monitoring certain equipment, and in initiating minor therapeutic procedures. He will gain an understanding of therapeutic planning and observation, general and emergency patient care, and an appreciation of the hospital and community health facilities.

The Trainee:

Adult men and women with the following pre requisites qualify as candidates for the program:

1. A high school diploma or its equivalent and courses in Chemistry, Algebra, and Biology.
2. Experience in the health field (such as corpsman, LPN).
3. Completion of an application form.
4. Three letters of reference, preferably including high school principal, recent employer, or commanding officer.
5. Academic records of all formal education on the high school level and above.
6. A personal interview at Duke with the Selection Committee, if feasible.
7. IQ and psychological testing.

Academic accomplishments are thoroughly reviewed. The experience requirement is necessary because of the beginning level of the course material. An expressed desire for a career in the health field is mandatory.

The Program:

The training program covers a two-year (24 month) Period. Classes begin the first week in October. The curriculum is divided into two categories; preclinical and clinical.

Preclinical spans the first eight months and includes courses in:

1. Anatomy and Physiology - 60 hours
2. Pathophysiology and Nursing - 140 hours

3. Animal Surgery - 90 hours
4. Pharmacology - 60 hours
5. Metabolism - 50 hours
6. Electronics - 90 hours
7. Psychosomatic Medicine - 25 hours
8. Basic Lab - 25 hours
9. Physical Diagnosis - 100 hours
10. Public Health - 10 hours

Clinical rotations include supervised exercises in defined areas or disciplines in the Medical Center and surrounding hospitals and clinics. The following rotations are mandatory:

1. Electronics Instrument Shop - 4 weeks
2. Pulmonary Function - 2 weeks
3. Inhalation Therapy - 6 weeks
4. Emergency Room - 4 weeks

The remaining rotations are elective and last 8 weeks:

1. Cardiovascular Lab
2. Endocrinology
3. Pulmonary and Allergy
4. Urology
5. Rheumatology
6. Neurology
7. Hyperbaria
8. Lincoln Hospital
9. Outside Physician
10. VA Admitting
11. Gastroenterology

The trainee, with appropriate counseling, can select five elective rotations and return to one of the five for additional experience during the final eight weeks or he can choose six elective rotations. The rotations allow the trainees to apply the theory taught in the didactic portion and to develop additional skills.

Progress, Certification and Stipend:

Progress through each phase of the program will be monitored by the physicians and nurses in charge. Further evaluations will be made based on written and oral examinations. After successful completion of the entire program, the individual will be certified as a "Physician's Assistant" by the Duke University Medical Center. There is no tuition. The trainee's costs, in addition to normal living expenses, are approximately fifty dollars for books and materials. Each trainee will receive a stipend of two hundred dollars per month during the first 12 months of the program and two hundred fifty dollars per month during the second 12 months of the program.

Opportunities for the Graduate:

Graduates of this program are potential employees in many areas. Within our own hospital, individuals with the above training are needed in research

laboratories, clinical areas, diagnostic laboratories, renal center, and hyperbaric chamber. Graduates might be employed by a physician, a group of physicians or a community hospital. We believe that the skills and training of the Physician's Assistant will make him a stable and productive member of the health team with opportunities for a career and future growth in many health related areas.

Other:

Since the program is new, many questions are asked by prospective applicants. In certain areas we are unable to definitively answer the questions. However, the following comments refer to the most frequently asked queries.

1. The course does not carry college credits. However, much of the material is presented on a college level.
2. Campus housing is not available but suitable quarters are available within a short distance of the Medical Center.
3. We have not established a quotable salary range for graduates because of our limited experience with men in the field.
4. The role of the graduate has not been legally defined. A great deal of interest and effort in resolving this question has developed.
5. We do not suggest that the graduate of this program will automatically occupy a particular position relative to other personnel on the health care team. While he will be a highly skilled member, his ultimate relationship to other team members will be determined by his own effectiveness.
6. The stipend is from a federal source, so trainees are not eligible for the GI Bill.

For application forms, direct all correspondence to:

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