

Proposed Guidelines
for the Educational Essentials
for the Physician's Assistants

This document has been prepared by the task force committee appointed by the Council of Academic Societies of the Association of American Medical Colleges to report on the standardization of physician's assistant programs. These proposed guidelines are submitted because of the need to develop education essentials applicable to the training of physician's assistants. These guidelines, to be available to the vast number of institutions in planning and developmental stages for such programs have been composed loose enough to allow significant latitude in training to encourage educational innovation, and yet close enough to maintain standards acceptable to the medical profession and the carriers of professional liability insurance.

Two organizations within the framework of organized medicine are primarily concerned with the education and training of physician's assistants: The Association of American Medical Colleges, and the American Medical Association. It is proposed that a Board of Evaluation and Registration (hereafter referred to as the Board) consisting of six members be appointed with membership comprised of the participating organizations. The functions of the Board will be to evaluate and accredit the established programs for the maintenance of high standards of education and to provide guidelines for continuing program development to be available to other institutions as new physician's assistant programs are initiated.

As a basic guideline for approval and recognition, the following elements should be evaluated for this type of training so that adequate information about the programs can be available to educational institutions, physicians, hospitals, prospective students, and others; and to insure the protection of the public and

the medical profession. Essential prerequisites for this concept require that physician's assistant programs must be affiliated with a college or university that maintains a cooperative arrangement with a teaching hospital; and physician's assistants must always work under the direction and supervision of qualified physicians and not as independent practitioners.

The following information should be recorded for all participating programs:

Name and Location of School
Hospital Affiliation
College/University Affiliation
Physician in Charge
Student Capacity
Month Classes Begin
Tuition

I. Administration

1. Acceptable programs for training physician's assistants may be conducted by approved medical schools, hospitals, or other acceptable clinics organized in accordance with present educational standards and in conjunction with a university or college.
2. All training of physician's assistants shall be under competent medical control.
3. Resources for continued operation of the program should be insured through regular budgets, gifts, or endowments, but not entirely through students' fees.

II. Organization

4. Adequate space, light, and modern equipment should be provided for all necessary teaching facilities. A library containing up-to-date references, texts, and scientific periodicals pertaining to clinical medicine and its

- specialties should be maintained or be readily accessible to the institution.
5. Satisfactory record systems should be provided for all work carried on in the field of patient care. Monthly and annual summarizations of the work of the medical affiliate should be available.
 6. Transcripts of high school and college credits and other credentials must be available for each student. To insure appropriate subsequent registration, it is essential that an evaluation of entrance qualifications be obtained from the Board. An acceptable school will keep records of each student's attendance and grades, and it will also record the type of tests performed. In addition, the school must have a complete and detailed curriculum on file, a synopsis of which will be submitted to the Board and thereby be available to the American Association of Medical Colleges, and the American Medical Association. This curriculum should include a detailed breakdown of the scope and content of all didactic material and clinical exposure and participation. An outline of all instruction should be supplied.
 7. At least four students should be enrolled in each class.

III. Faculty

8. The school should have a competent teaching staff. The director must be a graduate of medicine who is licensed to practice in the location of the school and who has had training and experience acceptable to the Board. He shall take part in and be responsible for the actual conduct of the program. He, or his representative, shall be in daily attendance for sufficient time to properly supervise the work and teaching. He should have at his disposal the resources of competent personnel adequately trained in the administration and operation of educational programs.
9. The staff must include at least one instructor who is a graduate of medicine. This position is in addition to that of the medical director. The

teaching faculty may consist of people other than physicians, but more than half of the total instruction must be provided by physicians.

IV. Prerequisites for Admission

10. Prerequisites for admission for physician's assistant students should be approved by the Board and comply with one of the following sets of criteria:

A. Diploma Granting Programs:

1. A high school diploma from an accredited high school or successful completion of an approved high school equivalency examination.
2. Previous training in the health field with at least one year of experience in direct patient care.
3. Three letters of recommendation including one from a physician with whom the applicant has recently worked.

B. Degree Granting Programs:

1. A high school diploma from an accredited high school or successful completion of an approved high school equivalency examination.
2. The successful completion of the prerequisites for a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degree from the affiliated college or university with the exception of the requirements for a major. These courses should include not less than three semester hours in each mathematics and physical sciences and not less than six semester hours in biological sciences. Certification of the proficiency of a student by a college in any of the above required subjects may be accepted in lieu of those requirements.

11. Only those students meeting one of the above sets of requirements may participate in the professional portion of a program. Schools are encouraged to participate in affiliated programs leading to an academic degree. The completion of the professional program and successful certification and registration of the student should be acceptable as credit towards a degree so that

an individual student may be granted a degree if and when he completes the other necessary prerequisites.

V. Didactic Curriculum

12. The course of professional training should include in-depth education of the following subjects: Anatomy, Physiology, Pharmacology, Nutrition and Metabolism, History Taking, Physical Examination, Basic Laboratory Procedures, and Clinical Medicine.
13. The instruction should follow a plan outlined and include text assignments, lectures, discussions, demonstrations, supervised practice, and practical oral and written examinations to assure adequate student evaluation.

VI. Clinical Curriculum

14. Each student should receive practical instruction and clinical experience adequate in scope and depth and under competent supervision to provide an in-depth understanding of the evaluative and therapeutic techniques and procedures of at least one clinical specialty. Participating hospitals should be accredited and should be otherwise acceptable to the Board. Approved schools should have the availability of hospital services of at least 200 beds and yearly admissions of at least 6,000 patients. Community based clinical experience and teaching should be included in the program.

VII. Ethics

15. Students will be required to conduct their performance in accordance with the ethical standards of the parent institution. Failure to comply with these ethical standards may be cause for their immediate removal. Registered physician's assistants will be required to conduct their performance in accordance with the ethical standards set by the Board. Failure to comply with these ethical standards will be cause for immediate removal from

the registry.

16. Schools conducted primarily for the purpose of substituting students for paid professional help will be not considered for approval.

VIII. Health

17. Applicants will be required to submit evidence of good health and successful vaccination, and the report of a medical examination should be part of the student's record. This examination should include an x-ray examination of the chest. Provisions should be made for medical care and hospitalization when necessary for a reasonable length of time.

IX. Admission to the Approved List

18. Applications for approval of a school for the training of physician's assistants should be made to the Board. Forms will be supplied for this purpose on request and should be completed by the director of the program requesting the approval. Information regarding the registration of qualified physician's assistants should also be acquired from the Board. For a person to be registered he must be a graduate of an approved program and successfully complete the examinations approved by the Board. Only those individuals who meet these requirements will be designated by the title of Registered Physician's Assistants.
19. Approval of an institution may be withdrawn whenever in the opinion of the Board the school does not maintain an educational service in accordance with the above standards. Whenever a training program has not been in operation for a period of two consecutive years, approval will automatically be withdrawn.
20. Approved schools should notify the Board whenever a change occurs in the directorship of the program.