



# Physician Assistants in Urology

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# Outline

- What are Physician Assistants?
- History
- PAs at UHN
- Roles
- Why hire a PA?
- Hiring a PA / Funding



# What are Physician Assistants?

- Physician Assistants (PAs) practice medicine under a supervising physician. They act as health care extenders, not sole practitioners.
- A PAs scope of practice mirrors the scope of practice of the supervising physician.
- PAs conduct patient histories, physical examinations, order investigations/medications (as per medical directives), formulate a differential diagnosis, perform procedures, create/contribute to the treatment plan, and take part in patient follow-ups.



# What are Physician Assistants?

Specialized roles may be assigned to PAs who have had the requisite training/experience, as determined by the supervising physician. PAs are assessed by the supervising physician to have the knowledge, skills and judgment required to carry out Controlled acts that are delegated to them.

- PAs have the flexibility to adjust to different work assignments based on clinical need, volumes and wait times and any identifiable gaps in the clinical care processes.
- PAs are physician extenders. They do not replace physicians.



# History of Physician Assistants

- The Physician Assistant profession evolved in the United States during the mid 1960s, in response to a shortage and uneven geographical distribution of doctors.
- The first trainees were highly skilled military medics who, following the Vietnam War service, had no equivalent medical role in civilian life.
- There are currently over 120,000 PAs working in the United States, with 225 accredited programs.
- There are PAs working in over 40 countries.



# History of Physician Assistants in Ontario

- 1984: Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) adopts “Physician Assistants” role for senior medics.
- 1999: The Canadian Academy of Physician Assistants (CAPA) is officially established with donations from members from CAF.
- 2001: CAPA, with the help of the CAF, develops the occupational competency profile for civilian PAs in Canada.
- 2003: First civilian licensed PA begins practice in Winnipeg, Manitoba.



# History of Physician Assistants in Ontario

- 2003: Physician Assistant Certification Council (PACC) establishes national entry to practice certification exam and the Canadian Certified Physician Assistant Credential.
- 2003: The CMA recognizes PAs as a health profession paving the way for accreditation process for PA education programs in Canada.
- 2006: The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) announces the inclusion of PAs in Ontario's provincial health care system.



# History of Physician Assistants in Ontario

- 2007: The MOHLTC implements the PA demonstration pilot project, employs five PAs in the five separate emergency departments.
- 2012: The Health Profession Regulatory Advisory Council (HPRAC) recommends establishing a compulsory registry under the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario for PAs practicing in Ontario, recommending against regulation. HPRAC states PAs in Ontario do not meet “the risk of harm threshold for public safety” due to oversight of physician supervision.





# History of Physician Assistants in Ontario

- Currently, Physician Assistants are not regulated in Ontario. Physician Assistants may certify through the physician assistant council of Canada which involves successfully completing a qualifying exam and maintaining a set number of continuing medical education credits.

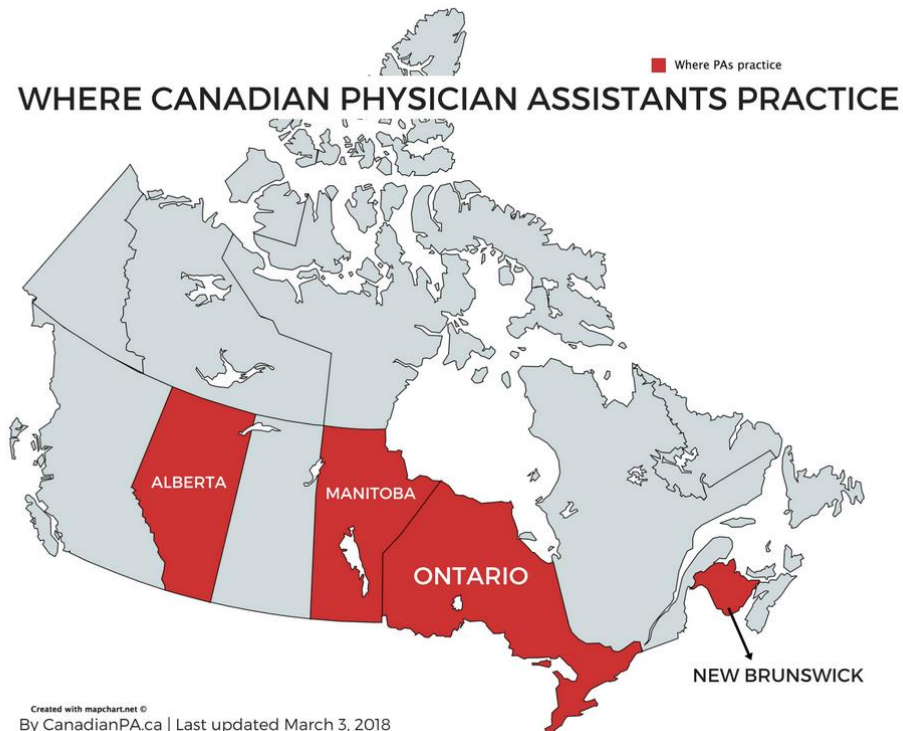
Historical Timeline: Capa-Acam

<https://capa-acam.ca/historical-timeline/>



# History of Physician Assistants in Ontario

There are approximately 700 PAs working across Canada and 400 in Ontario.





# Training

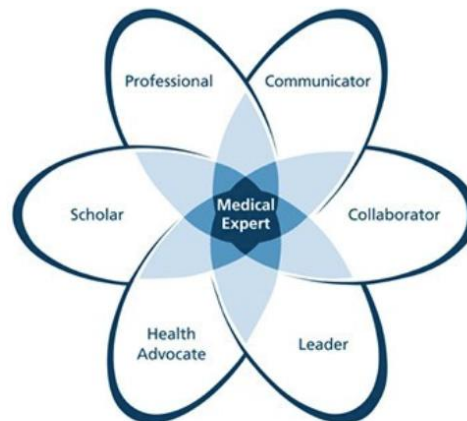
PAs trained in the medical model

They complete a 24 month second entry program with 12 months of clerkship



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COMPREHENSIVE COMPETENCY PROFILE FOR CANADIAN  
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS



**CANMEDS**

A Day in the Life Of a Canadian Physician Assistant in Family Medicine

<https://canadianpa.ca/familymedicinepa/>



# Training

There are three civilian PA programs in Canada: McMaster University, University of Manitoba and University of Toronto,

PAs are trained as **Generalists**.

Develop urology specific knowledge “On the Job”

Students receive no Urology specific clinical exposure, unless during an elective rotation.



# Physician Assistants at UHN

There are **30** PAs working at UHN

Across **10** medical specialties

There are currently **3** urology PAs

PAs have been integrated into the urology team for **5** years

UHN has hospital wide medical directives for all PAs  
as well as urology specific medical directives



# Physician Assistants' Role

- PAs can work in any clinical setting to extend physician services, complement existing services and aid in improving patient access to health care.
- At UHN, PAs spend time in outpatient and cystoscopy clinics. We function similar to a resident seeing patients and reviewing treatment plans as needed.
- In cystoscopy clinic, we have been trained to complete cystoscopies, urethra dilation, ureteric stenting/washing/retrograde pyelogram, and trial of voids.



# Physician Assistants' Role

- These procedures are done independently, or under the direct supervision of the physician, depending on training and experience.
- PAs are not just limited to clinics.
- At UHN, we are still navigating the most useful way to further expand the reach of PAs in urology, with involvement in the operating room and managing the ward as areas for possible future expansion.
- Other services at UHN already use PAs on the wards as well as in the operating room.



# Why Hire a Physician Assistant?

- Improving Physician flexibility and workload
  - PAs can handle routine office visits, rounds, on-call - freeing the physician to manage more complex cases.
  - Physicians who employ a PA were able to work one day less per week, while increasing office/clinic hours.
- Improved patient satisfaction.
  - Improving wait time and access to care for patients.
- Practice savings
  - Surgical PA's employers pay 32 cents for every dollar generated by the PA. (American study)





# Physician Assistant Funding

- Grants are available through Health Force Ontario for new graduates.
  - Time limited financial support for 1 to 2 years up to \$46,000 to help facilitate the transition of PA graduates into the health care system.
  - Aims to encourage the sustainability of the PA profession by matching graduates with employers committed to the long-term integration and financial support of PA roles in their organization.
- Funding models
  - HFO grant, hospital, physician, percentage of billings or combination.



# Hiring a Physician Assistant

- Apply for funding from Health Force Ontario for new grad funding.
  - Funding announcement and deadline for submission is usually in August
  - All funded jobs are distributed to all new grads.
- Supervise a PA for an elective rotation
  - PA students are responsible to find their own electives. This is done through know contacts or through previous used placements.
- Post your job through CAPA.



# Physician Assistants Entering Urology

- As mentioned, PAs have little specific urology training.
- Training received is from a primary care perspective.
- They will require on the job training.
- Newly hired PAs will be comparable to 4<sup>th</sup> year medical students.



# Questions?