



Company Background

The National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) is the only nationally recognized credentialing organization for physician assistants (PA). In fact, all U.S. states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories have decided to rely on NCCPA certification as one of the criteria for licensure or regulation of physician assistants. As of Dec. 31, 2018, there were approximately 131,000 certified PAs.

Founded as a not-for-profit organization, NCCPA was created to fulfill the role of an independent certifying authority for the PA profession. The organization accomplishes that through the following exams and programs:

- **Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE)**

To attain certification, PAs must graduate from an accredited PA program and pass the PANCE, which is a broad-based, multiple-choice test that assesses generalist medical and surgical knowledge across all organ systems. After passing PANCE, PAs become NCCPA-certified, which entitles them to use the Physician Assistant-Certified® (PA-C®) designation after their name.

- **Certification Maintenance & Recertification**

Like physicians, PAs retain certification by:

- Completing ongoing and substantial Continuing Medical Education (CME), and
- Passing the Physician Assistant National Recertifying Exam (PANRE) every 10 years

The PANRE tests core medical knowledge and covers a broad spectrum of medical and surgical issues.

- **Specialty Certificates of Added Qualifications (CAQs)**

CAQs effectively document specialty experience and expertise and are available in the following specialties:

- Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery
- Emergency Medicine
- Hospital Medicine
- Nephrology

- Orthopaedic Surgery
- Pediatrics
- Psychiatry

NCCPA continues to take steps to guarantee the integrity of the certification process, including:

- Institution of random CME audits;
- Requiring new graduates to become certified within six years or six attempts at PANCE; and
- Enacting a comprehensive disciplinary policy, including the establishment of a *Code of Conduct for Certified and Certifying PAs*.

For more information about NCCPA please visit www.nccpa.net.

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