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PA Profession Continues to Gain Nationwide Momentum as Workforce Numbers and Salaries Increase

Number of Certified PAs grew over six percent in 2018, average salary up more than 12 percent in four-year span

Johns Creek, Ga., January 29, 2020 – For the fifth consecutive year, the number of Certified Physician Assistants in the United States continues to increase.

According to the latest [Statistical Profile of Certified Physician Assistants by State](#), one of four annual reports issued by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), the PA workforce grew 6.6 percent between 2017 and 2018. The states with the greatest increase in the number of Certified PAs include Rhode Island (13.7 percent), Arkansas (11.4 percent), Nevada (11.3 percent) and Indiana (10.4 percent).

In four states that have more rural populations, close to half of the PAs are working in primary care specialties. However, PAs are also helping to meet the needs of physician shortages in other areas such as surgery, emergency medicine, and a wide variety of other practice areas. Just over 40 percent of PAs in the U.S. are working in a hospital setting.

The profile data also indicates that in between 2014 and 2018 the average salary for Certified Physician Assistants has increased by 12.4 percent, with the highest median salaries in Alaska, California and Nevada (\$125,000).

The report comes just after the publication of the annual [U.S. News and World Report Best Jobs list](#), which ranked physician assistant as the #3 best job overall for 2020, and the #2 best job in health care.

“The PA profession continues to be a rewarding and eagerly sought career choice. Not only are PAs making a difference in the more than nine million patients lives each week, this profession offers clinical flexibility, growth opportunities and competitive salaries,” says NCCPA President and CEO Dawn Morton-Rias.

Additional key findings from the 2018 report include:

- In the wake of primary care provider shortages across the country, Alaska leads the nation in the number of physician assistants practicing in primary care with 50.4 percent. 25.8 percent of Certified PAs in the United States work in primary care.
- California ranked highest in the nation among states with the largest percentage of minority Certified PAs (33.7 percent), followed by Hawaii (28.3 percent) and Maryland (24 percent).

- California also ranked highest in the country among states with the largest percentage (52.9 percent) of Certified PAs that are able to communicate with their patients in a language other than English. The most common languages used to communicate with patients other than English in California are Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese.

“Certified PAs complete a comprehensive education and clinical training process for entry to the profession. Their commitment to maintaining high standards of clinical knowledge and skills throughout their careers makes it possible for patients to have more options when it comes to accessing timely, affordable, high-quality health care for all,” Morton-Rias said.

About the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants

The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) is the only certifying organization for the 139,000 physician assistants (PAs) in the United States. The PA-C credential is awarded by NCCPA to PAs who fulfill certification, certification maintenance and recertification requirements. NCCPA also administers the Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) program for experienced, Certified PAs practicing in seven specialties. For more information, visit <http://www.nccpa.net>.

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