



## 2017 Statistical Profile of Recently Certified Physician Assistants

ANNUAL REPORT

National Commission on Certification  
of Physician Assistants

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## Message from the President and CEO



Dear Colleagues:

This is the fifth year that NCCPA has published the Statistical Report on Recently Certified PAs — information that has never been more relevant.

The health care industry faces so many challenges including physician shortages, skyrocketing demand for services, dire shortages in underserved areas, and the mandate to deliver value-based care. Today, employers, policymakers, insurers and patients all have a vested interest in the data in this report, because it offers insight into the future PA workforce.

The goal is to have the right workforce available to provide the right care at the right time. This is the ideal to deliver the quality metrics of increased productivity, improved patient satisfaction and decreased cost.

That is why NCCPA segments recently certified PAs— so that all interested parties can understand supply and demand. The big picture is that the demand remains high for certified PAs, and that they are well-compensated in terms of both salary and other benefits.

However, the details are important to analyze. Are there enough new PAs in the pipeline to fill current and forecasted openings? What is the cost of hiring? What specialties, geographies and clinical setting are applicants seeking?

This report answers those questions and more. We could not offer this valuable resource without the survey responses provided by 78% of the 8,788 PAs who were newly certified in 2017. We thank them for their input and for the contributions they are on their way to making in every state, specialty and clinical setting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dawn Morton-Rias". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dawn Morton-Rias, Ed.D, PA-C  
President and CEO

# About the Data and Collection Methodology

## Introduction

Since certifying the first physician assistants (PAs) in 1975, NCCPA has collected data on the PA profession as PAs completed various processes related to obtaining initial certification and then maintaining certification by earning and logging continuing medical education credits and passing recertification examinations. In May 2012, NCCPA's data gathering efforts were significantly enhanced with the launch of the PA Professional Profile. This data gathering instrument is presented to PAs through a secure portal within NCCPA's website. The Profile was launched with two modules: "About Me" and "My Practice."

In December 2012, NCCPA added a "Recently Certified" module delivered online to PAs who have been certified (for the first time) for less than six months. This report highlights the data collected from this module.

## Data Editing and Analysis

Data reflected in this report includes responses from PAs who were certified for the first time in 2017. The participants included in this report answered at least a portion of the survey between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2017. In addition, some data was obtained from other NCCPA data collection strategies (as noted within the report). As of December 31, 2017, there were 6,843 recently certified PAs who provided responses out of the 8,788 recently certified PAs with access to the module (77.9% response rate.)

The data provided in this report has been aggregated from the individual responses provided by PAs through the PA Professional Profile or other NCCPA data gathering efforts. Responses were examined for consistency and potential errors. In cases of obvious error or inconclusive data, the responses were not included in the analysis. The number of responses to individual items varies due to differing response rates or due to the data being removed for reasons previously noted. Analyses of the data consist primarily of descriptive statistics

## About NCCPA

NCCPA is the only certifying organization for physician assistants in the United States. Established as a not-for-profit organization in 1974, NCCPA is dedicated to assuring the public that certified PAs meet established standards of clinical knowledge and cognitive skills upon entry into practice and throughout their careers. All U.S. states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories have decided to rely on NCCPA certification as one of the criteria for licensure or regulation of PAs. More than 150,000 PAs have been certified by NCCPA since 1975, and approximately 123,000 were certified at the end of 2017.

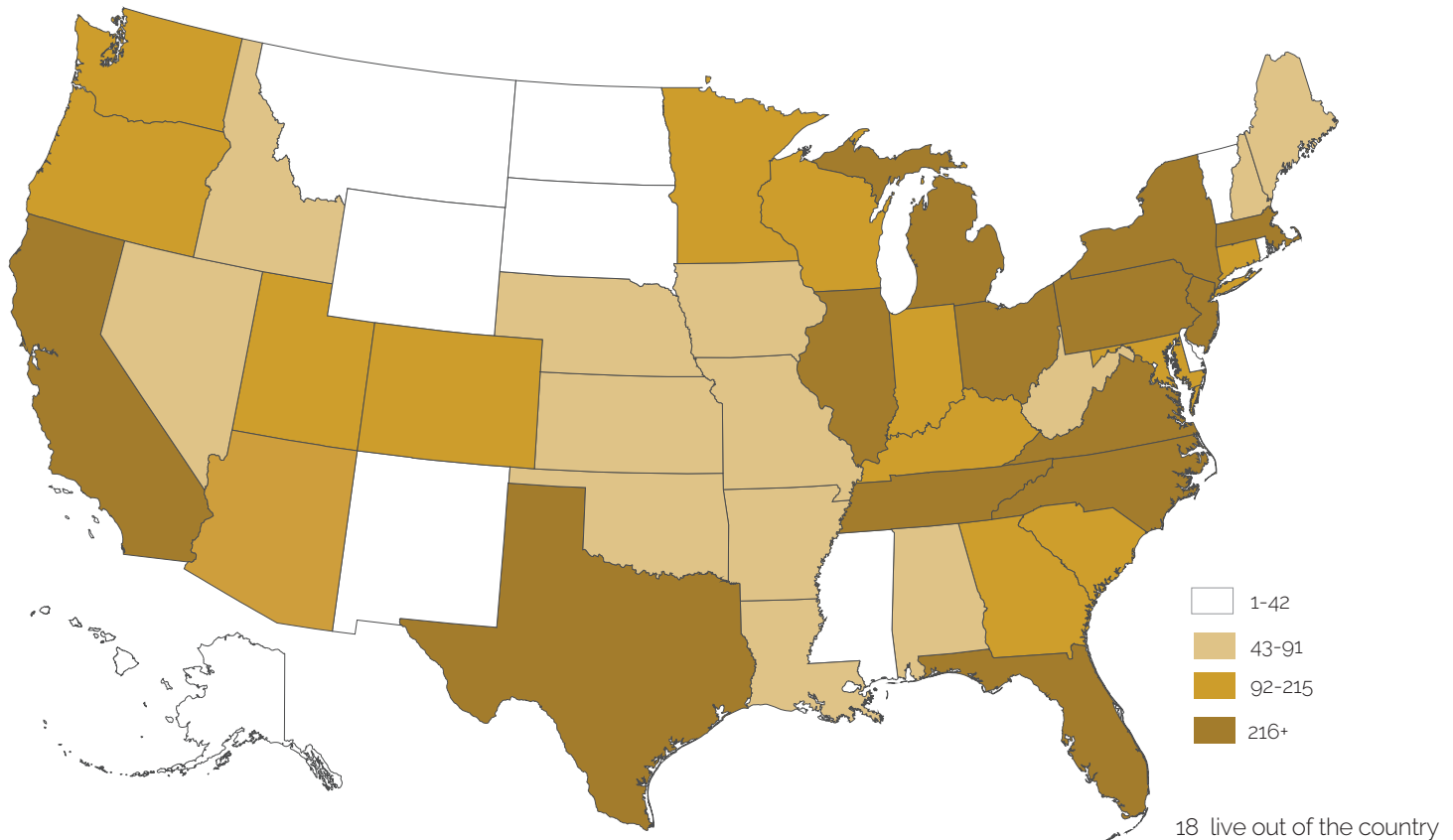


For more information about NCCPA, visit our website: [www.nccpa.net](http://www.nccpa.net)

# Distribution of Recently Certified PAs

Number of recently Certified PAs by state (divided by quartiles); number, percentage of recently Certified PAs by state

**Distribution of Recently Certified PAs by State (Divided by Quartiles)**



The above highlights the states with the greatest numbers of recently Certified PAs based on state of residence as reported to NCCPA. The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) expects that the number of PA educational programs will grow from 236 (July 2018) to 293 by October 1, 2021, which would have an impact on the number of PAs seeking NCCPA certification.

There were **8,788** recently Certified PAs who had access to the PA Professional Profile in 2017. The map illustrates the distribution of those PAs.

# Distribution of Recently Certified PAs

## Recently Certified PAs by State (Number, Percent of Total, and Rank)

State	Number	% of Total (Rank)
Alabama	81	0.9 % (30)
Alaska	21	0.2% (47)
Arizona	205	2.3 % (16)
Arkansas	51	0.6% (38)
<b>California</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>6.2% (4)</b>
Colorado	160	1.8 % (19)
Connecticut	148	1.7% (20)
Delaware	24	0.3% (45)
D.C.	23	0.3 % (46)
<b>Florida</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>6.5% (3)</b>
Georgia	215	2.5% (14)
Hawaii	9	0.1% (50)
Idaho	76	0.9% (32)
Illinois	268	3.1% (10)
Indiana	138	1.6% (22)
Iowa	85	1.0% (29)
Kansas	54	0.6% (37)
Kentucky	96	1.1% (26)
Louisiana	91	1.0% (27)
Maine	43	0.5% (39)
Maryland	176	2.0% (18)
Massachusetts	314	3.6% (9)
Michigan	369	4.2% (7)
Minnesota	189	2.2% (17)
Mississippi	35	0.4% (42)
Missouri	88	1.0% (28)

Bolded states are those with the greatest number of recently Certified PAs.



The states with the greatest number of recently Certified PAs are:

1. **New York**
2. **Pennsylvania**
3. **Florida**
4. **California**
5. **North Carolina**
6. **Texas**

Continued on page 8

## Distribution of Recently Certified Physician Assistants

### Recently Certified PAs by State (Number, Percent of Total, and Rank) cont.

State	Number	% of Total Rank
Montana	32	0.4% (43)
Nebraska	59	0.7% (34)
Nevada	65	0.7% (33)
New Hampshire	56	0.6% (35)
New Jersey	231	2.6% (12)
New Mexico	39	0.4% (41)
<b>New York</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>10.3% (1)</b>
<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>5.0% (5)</b>
North Dakota	18	0.2% (48)
Ohio	357	4.1% (8)
Oklahoma	81	0.9% (31)
Oregon	99	1.1% (25)
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>8.0% (2)</b>
Rhode Island	42	0.5% (40)
South Carolina	105	1.2% (24)
South Dakota	32	0.4% (44)
Tennessee	223	2.5% (13)
<b>Texas</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>5.0% (6)</b>
Utah	109	1.2% (23)
Vermont	18	0.2% (49)
Virginia	235	2.7% (11)
Washington	142	1.6% (21)
West Virginia	55	0.6% (36)
Wisconsin	208	2.4% (15)
Wyoming	9	0.1% (51)
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>8,770</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

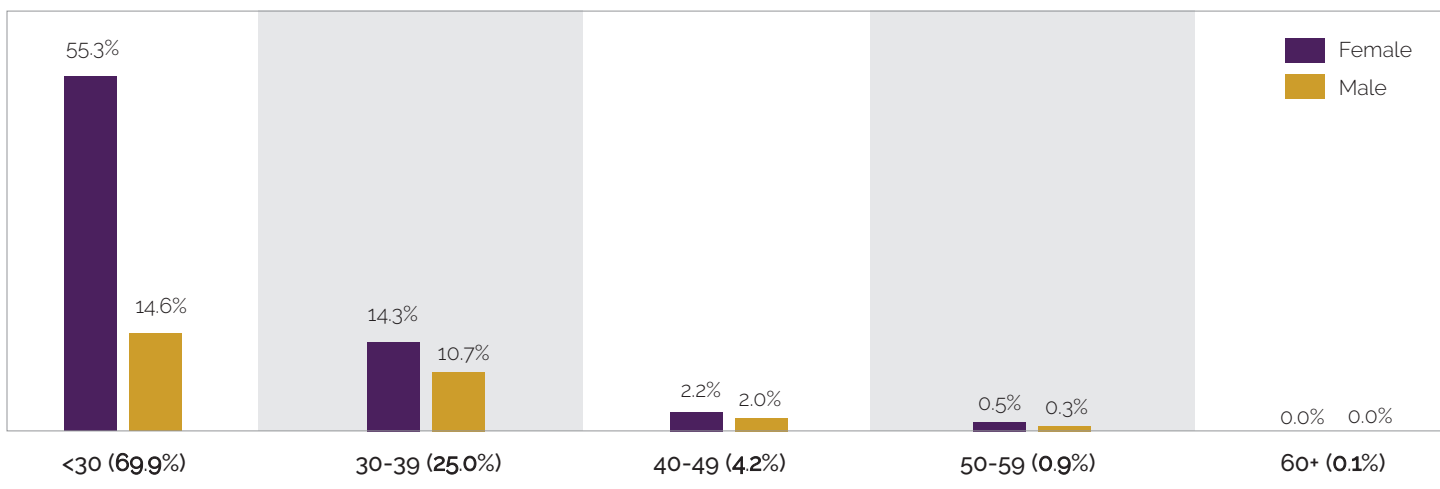
\*Note: PAs that reported an address in the U.S.. Additionally, 18 recently Certified PAs were living abroad.



# Gender and Age of Recently Certified Physician Assistants

Distribution of recently Certified PAs by age and gender; Number by gender; Number by age group.

## Distribution of Recently Certified PAs by Age and Gender



## Number of Recently Certified PAs by Gender

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	2,434	27.7%
Female	6,354	72.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,788</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Number of Recently Certified PAs by Age

Age Group	Number	Percent
<30	6,140	69.9%
30-39	2,199	25.0%
40-49	368	4.2%
50-59	75	0.9%
60+	6	<0.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,788</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



The median age of recently Certified PAs was **27** in 2017.  
The median age of all Certified PAs is **38**.

# Race and Ethnicity of Recently Certified Physician Assistants

Number of recently Certified PAs by race; Number by ethnicity

## Number and Percent of Recently Certified PAs by Race

Race	Number	Percent
White	5,520	86.4%
Black/African American	190	3.0%
Asian	508	8.0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	8	0.1%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	18	0.3%
Other	142	2.2%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>6,386</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Note: Respondents were able to choose multiple races, and 178 chose more than one race. The chart above includes responses from PAs who choose one race. 227 respondents indicated that they preferred not to answer the questions.

## Number of Recently Certified PAs by Ethnicity

Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Ethnicity	Number	Percent
Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano/a	165	2.5%
Puerto Rican	55	0.8%
Cuban	43	0.7%
Other Hispanic, Latino/a, Spanish origin	194	2.9%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>6.9%</b>

Note: Respondents were able to choose multiple ethnicities. 44 respondents chose more than one ethnicity. 93.1% (6,137) of the recently Certified PAs indicated they were not Hispanic, Latino/a, or of Spanish origin. 230 respondents indicated that they preferred not to answer the question.



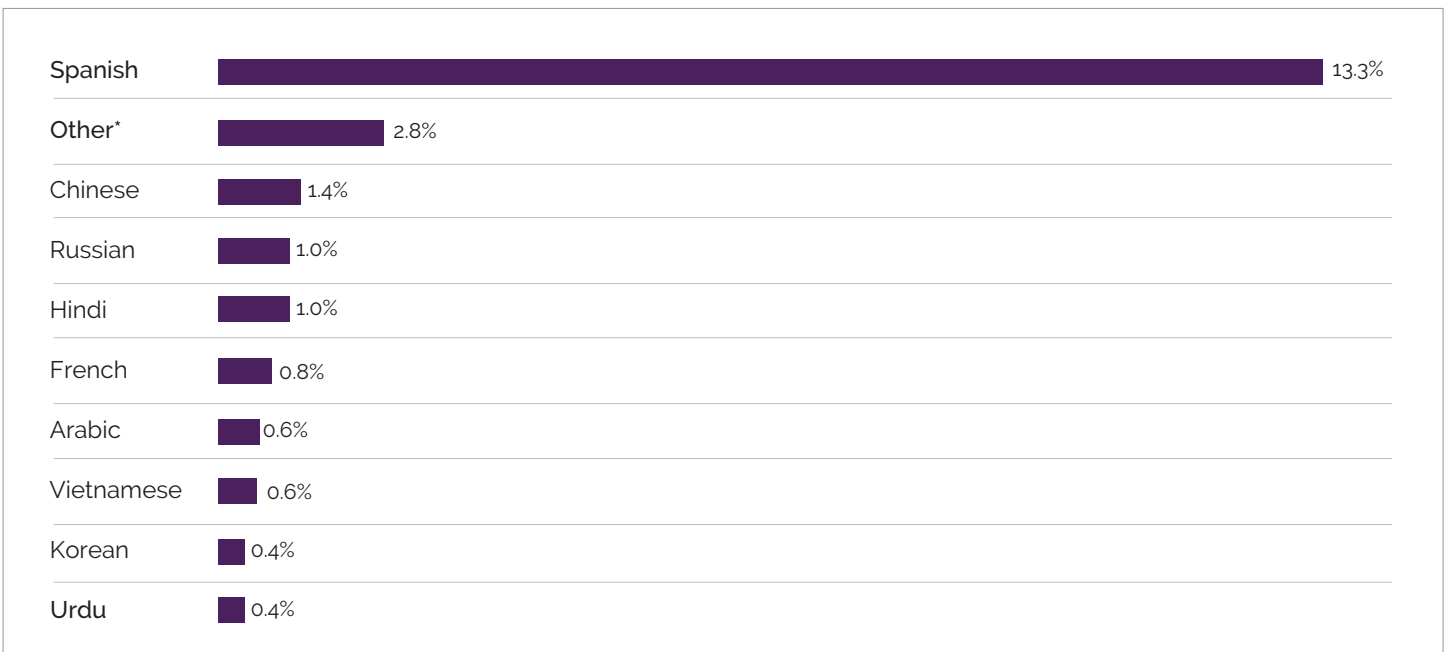
The percentage of Hispanic PAs increased from **3.5% in 2000**<sup>1</sup> to **6.2% in 2017**, but has remained steady for the past five years.

<sup>1</sup> Hooker, Roderick S. and James F. Cawley. *Physician Assistants in American Medicine*. New York: Churchill Livingstone, 2003. Print.

## Languages Other Than English Spoken with Patients

Top 10 languages other than English spoken with patients

### Percent of Recently Certified PAs who Communicate with Patients in Languages Other than English



Note: This table shows the percentage of recently Certified PAs who communicate with patients in languages other than English by the top 10 most frequently identified languages.



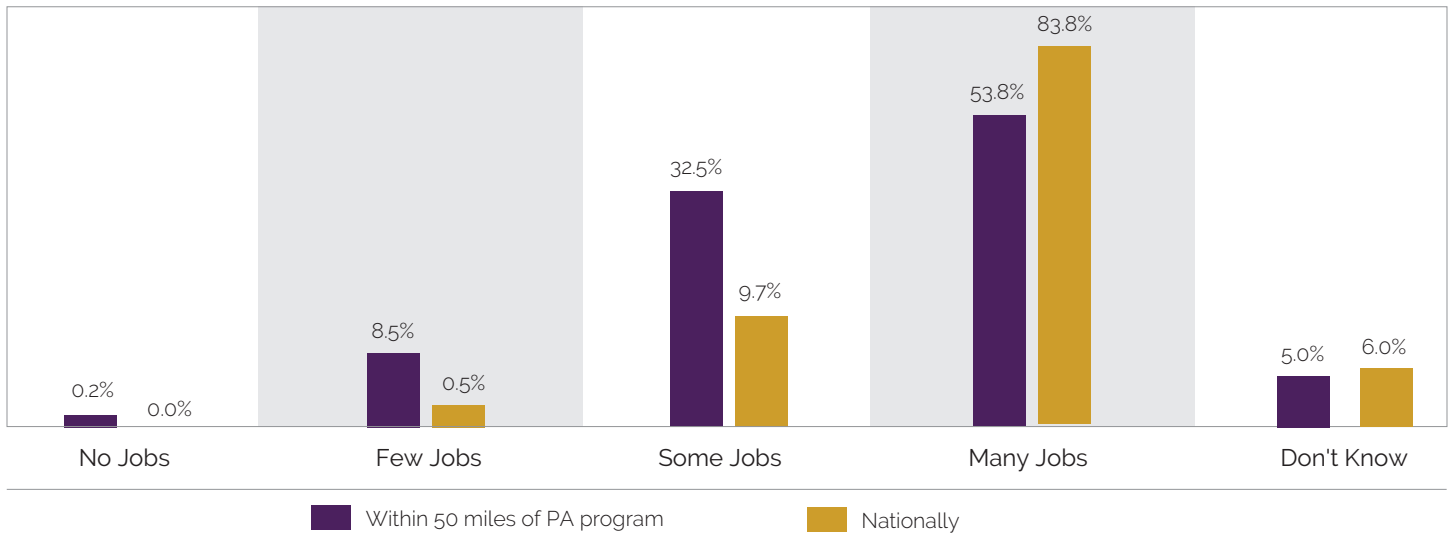
**20.8%** of recently Certified PAs indicated that they could communicate with patients in a language other than English.

**3.8%** speak two or more languages other than English.

# Assessment of Opportunities

Assessment of opportunities within 50 miles of PA program; Assessment of opportunities nationally

## Assessment of Job Opportunities



*U.S. News and World Report* ranked physician assistant third in their "The 25 Best Jobs of 2018" listing (January 10, 2018).

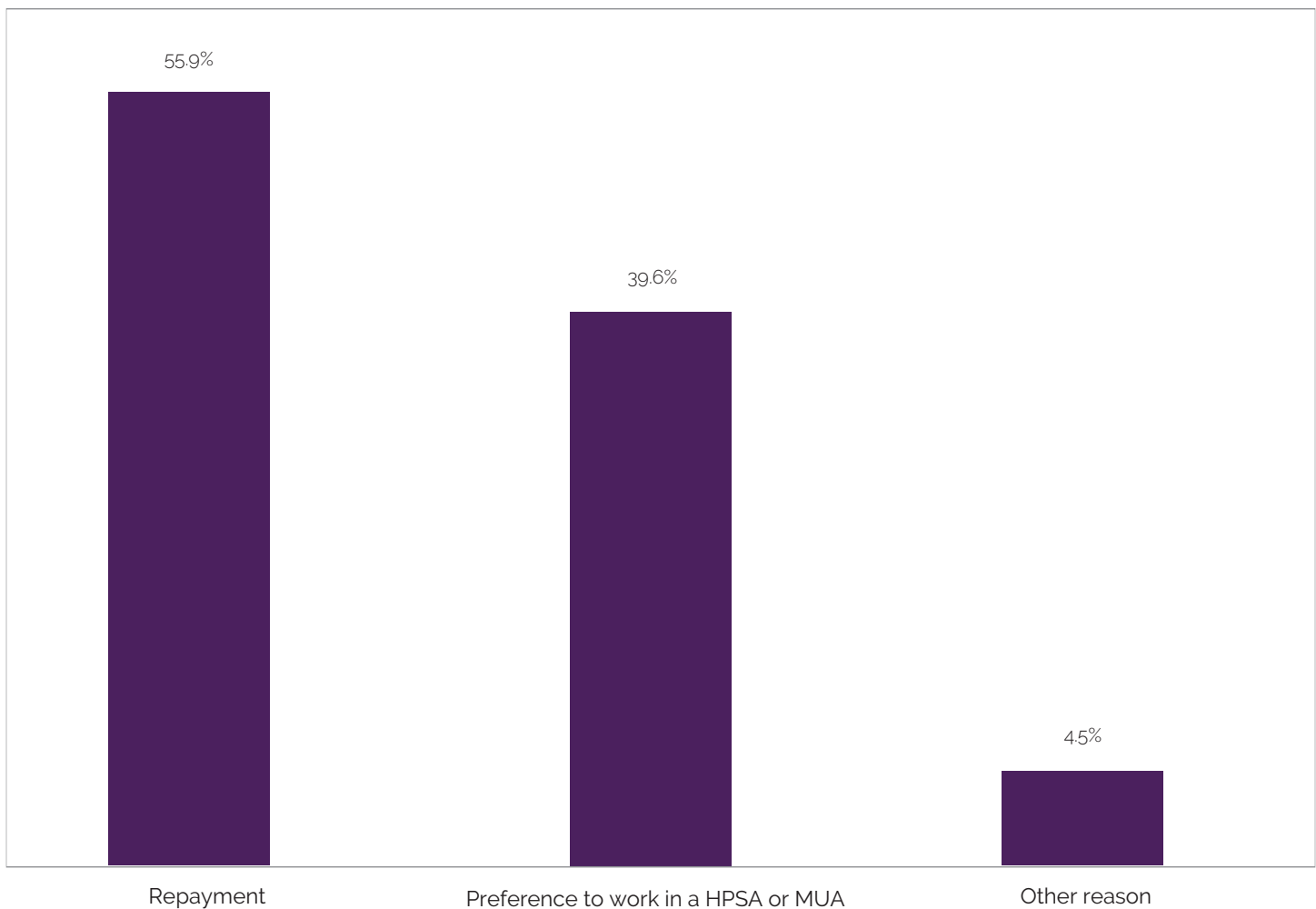
The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a growth of **37%** from 2016 to 2026 (much faster than the average for all occupations). The total percent change for all occupations during the same time period is **7%**.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Physician Assistants. (visited August 8, 2018).

## Obligation that Requires a Position in a HPSA or MUA

Factors motivating PAs to accept a PA position in a HPSA (Health Professional Shortage Area) or MUA (Medically Underserved Area)

### Motivation to Accept Position in HPSA or MUA for Those Who Are Working in a HPSA and/or MUA

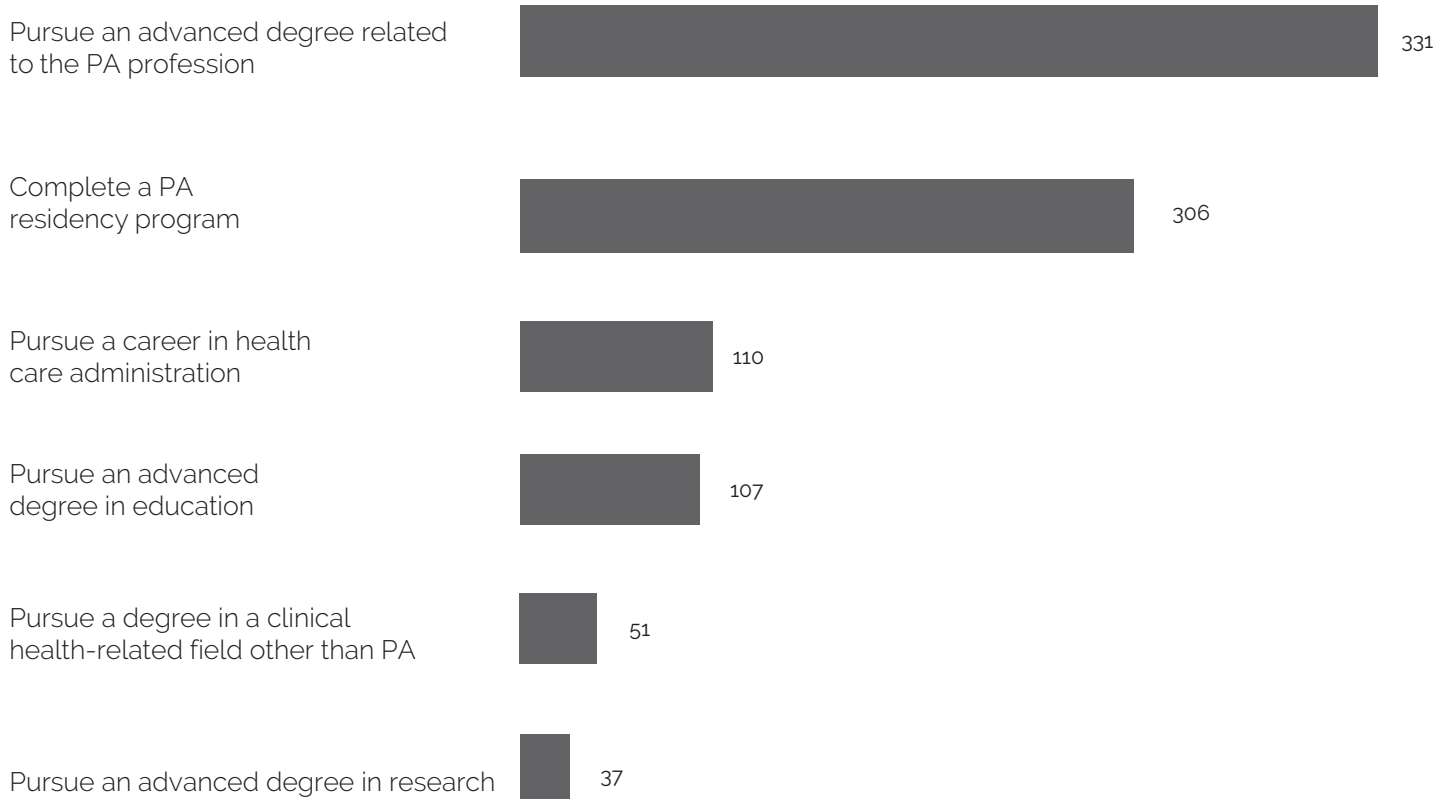


Overall, **111** (2.1%) of the recently certified graduates indicated they are a National Health Service Corps Scholar or a state or federal loan repayment program participant, which requires practicing in a federally designated HPSA or MUA.

## Plans to Seek Additional Education or Clinical Training

Number and percent of recently Certified PAs who plan to seek additional education or clinical training within the next three years; Reasons they are seeking additional education or clinical training; Degree pursuing if seeking a new degree

### Reasons PAs are Seeking Additional Education or Clinical Training



### Degree Pursued if Changing Health Fields

Degree in Clinical Health-Related Field	Number
Public Health	28
MD or DO	19
Other	4



**15.8%** of recently Certified PAs indicated they plan to seek additional education or clinical training within the next three years (this does not include on-the-job training or required CME).

# Educational Debt

Educational debt on completion of all training

## Number and Percent by Educational Debt

Area of Practice	Number	Percent
None	506	9.8%
Less than \$25,000	171	3.3%
\$25,000-\$49,999	262	5.1%
\$50,000-\$74,999	429	8.3%
\$75,000-\$99,999	608	11.8%
\$100,000-\$124,999	788	15.3%
\$125,000-\$149,999	760	14.7%
\$150,000-\$174,999	713	13.8%
\$175,000-\$199,999	480	9.3%
\$200,000-\$224,999	244	4.7%
\$225,000 or more	195	3.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,156</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*Note: 142 recently Certified PAs chose "Prefer not to answer"



### Educational Debt

Median: **\$112,500**

Mean: **\$114,706**



**15.1%** of recently Certified PAs who have accepted a position indicated that educational debt influenced their decision to seek a primary care or non-primary care position. Of the PAs who have not accepted a position, **24.4%** said their level of educational debt will influence their choice.

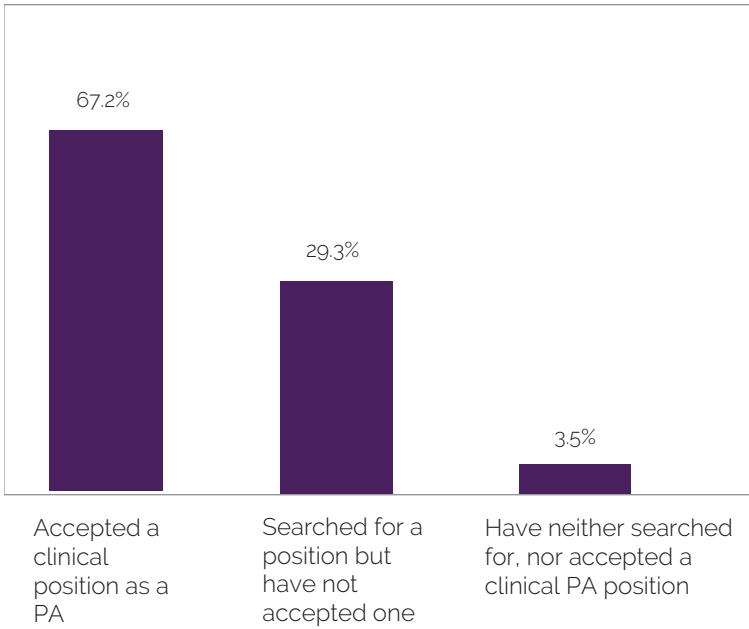
**Recently Certified Physician Assistants Who  
Accepted a Clinical Position**



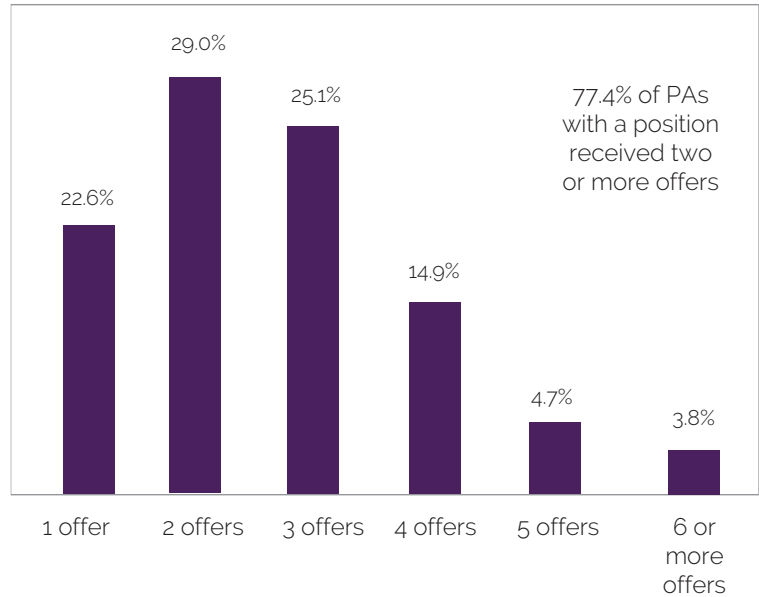
# Job Search in a Clinical PA Position

Acceptance of a job; Number of offers received

## Recently Certified PAs Job Search and Status



## Number of Job Offers for Recently Certified PAs



## Recently Certified PAs Job Search and Status

Clinical Position Search	Number
Yes, accepted a clinical position as a PA	3,591
Yes, searched for a position but have not yet accepted one	1,567
No, have neither searched for nor accepted a clinical PA position	189
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,347</b>

# Challenges Faced by Physician Assistants Who Have Searched for and Accepted a PA Position

Challenges faced in searching for a position

## Challenges Faced by Physician Assistants who Have Searched for and Accepted a PA Position

Challenges	Percent
Lack of clinical PA opportunities for recent graduates	15.9%
Lack of clinical opportunities in geographic area preferred	7.1%
Lack of clinical PA opportunities in preferred specialty	6.4%
Abundance of PA graduates competing for same position	5.0%
Lack of clinical PA opportunities in practice setting preferred	4.5%
Inadequate salary and/or compensation offered	4.1%
Lack of clinical PA employment opportunities	2.2%
Lack of positions that meet obligations for employment (i.e. NHSC)	2.0%
Lack of opportunities for spouse/partner	0.7%



"Lack of clinical PA opportunities for recent graduates" and "lack of clinical PA opportunities in geographic area preferred" were the top two challenges cited for recently Certified PAs regardless of employment status.

**79.3%** of PAs who have accepted a position indicated that they did not face any challenges when searching for a job.

# Selection of Clinical Position Location

Geographical location; Training site

## Location of Position Accepted



Geographical Location	Number
Area where PA grew up	1,290
Area where PA program located	1,180
Area lived in prior to attending PA program	958
Area where PA wants to live	750
Rural area	478
Other area	334
Urban medically underserved area	268

**37.1%** of PAs who accepted a position in a rural area indicated that they grew up in a rural area.

**20.8%** of PAs who accepted a position in an urban medically underserved area indicated that they grew up in an urban medically underserved area.

\*Note: Respondents were able to choose multiple locations.

## Position Accepted at a Training Site of Clinical Rotation

Geographical Location	Number	Percent
Yes	1,353	37.7%
No	2,238	62.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,591</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

# Hours Working Per Week and Time Spent in Work Activities

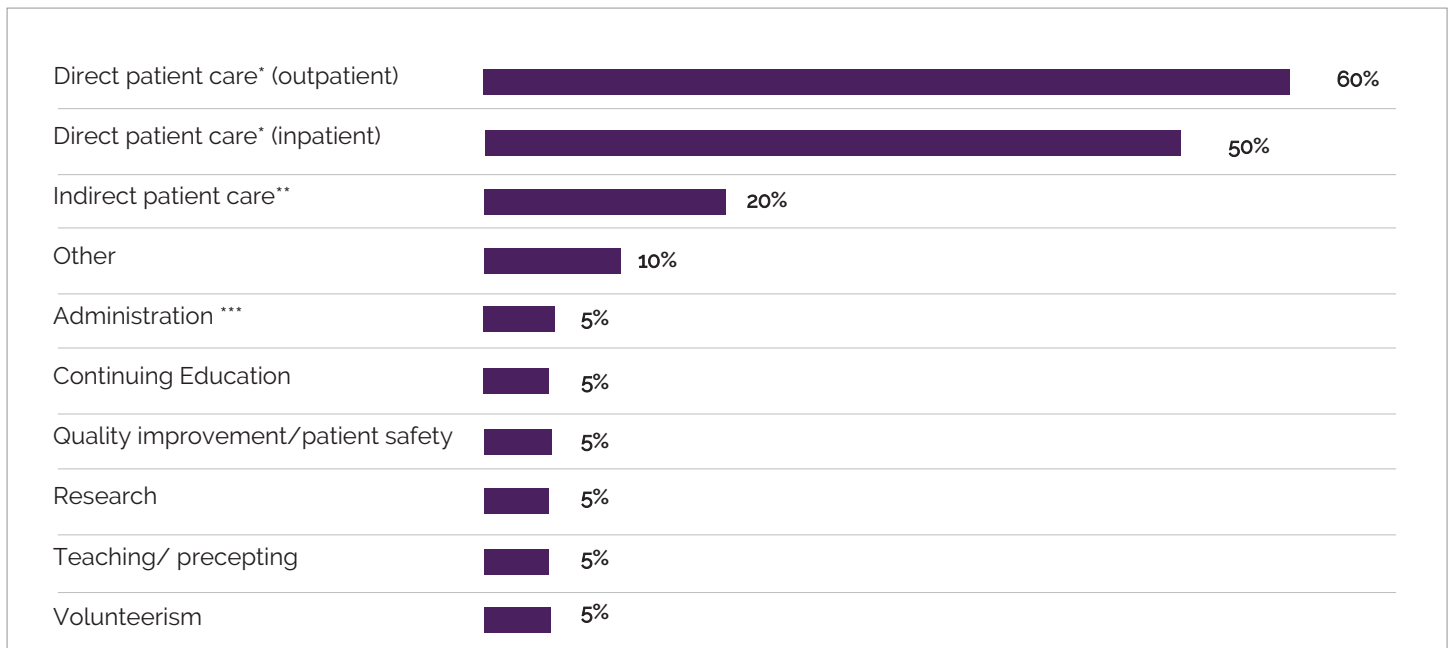
Number of working hours per week; Proportion of time spent in different work activities

## Number of Hours Expected to Work Per Week

Expected hours per work week	Number	Percent
1-10 hours	14	0.4%
11-20 hours	21	0.6%
21-30 hours	27	0.8%
31-40 hours	1,844	51.4%
41-50 hours	1,426	39.7%
More than 50 hours	259	7.2%

Note: Close to half (49.6%) of recently Certified PAs who have accepted a clinical position expect to work more than 40 hours per week.

## Median Proportion of Time Expected to Spend in Activities



\*Face-to-face

\*\* Phone calls, reviewing labs, charting

\*\*\* Own practice, hospital committees

# Practice Setting of Recently Certified Physician Assistants

Number and percent by practice setting of recently Certified PAs who have accepted a position

## Number and Percent of Recently Certified PAs by Practice Setting

Practice Setting	Number	Percent
Hospital	1,873	52.8%
Office-based private practice	1,075	29.9%
Urgent care*	195	5.4%
Community health center	104	2.9%
United States military (federal government)	69	1.9%
Other	67	1.9%
Rural health clinic	65	1.8%
Behavioral/mental health facility	24	0.7%
Ambulatory surgical center	21	0.6%
Public or community health clinic (non-federally qualified)	20	0.6%
Veterans Administration (federal government)	17	0.5%
Extended care facility/Nursing home	10	0.3%
School-based or college -based health center or school clinic	8	0.2%
Occupational health setting	6	0.2%
Indian health service (federal government)	5	0.1%
Public health service (federal government)	5	0.1%
Free clinic	4	0.1%
Retail clinic*	4	0.1%
Rehabilitation facility	2	<0.1%
Bureau of Prisons (federal government)	1	<0.1%
Home Health Care Agency	1	<0.1%
Unsure/Don't Know	15	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,591</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**52.8%** of recently Certified PAs who have accepted a position work in a hospital setting. Overall **40.0%** of PAs work in a hospital setting.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, Inc. (2018, May). 2017 Statistical Profile of Certified Physician Assistants: An Annual Report of the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants.

\* Practice setting included for the first time in 2017.

## Practice Area of Recently Certified PAs

Number and percent by principal area of recently Certified PAs who have accepted a position

### Number and Percent of Recently Certified PAs by Principal Clinical Area

Area of Practice	Number	Percent
Addiction Medicine*	4	0.1%
Adolescent Medicine	1	<0.1%
Anesthesiology	2	0.1%
Critical Care Medicine	111	3.1%
Dermatology	96	2.7%
Emergency Medicine	684	19.1%
Family Medicine/ General Practice	618	17.2%
Gynecology	7	0.2%
Hospice and Pallative Medicine	1	<0.1%
Hospital Medicine	222	6.2%
Internal Medicine - General Practice	149	4.1%
Internal Medicine- Subspecialties	290	8.1%
Neurology	36	1.0%
Obstetrics and Gynecology	39	1.1%
Occupational Medicine	9	0.3%
Ophthalmology	2	0.1%
Otolaryngology	29	0.8%
Pain Management	26	0.7%
Pathology	0	0.0%
Pediatrics	51	1.4%
Pediatrics- Subspecialties	48	1.3%
Physical Medicine / Rehabilitation	5	0.1%

\*Addiction medicine appeared on the profile for the first time in 2017.

## Practice Area of Recently Certified PAs (cont.)

Number and percent by principal area of recently Certified PAs who have accepted a position

### Number and Percent of Recently Certified PAs by Principal Clinical Area

Area of Practice	Number	Percent
Preventative Medicine/ Public Health	5	0.1%
Psychiatry	72	2.0%
Radiation Oncology	5	0.1%
Radiology	21	0.6%
Surgery- General	134	3.7%
Surgery- Subspecialties	692	19.3%
Urology	24	0.7%
Other	208	5.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,591</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**22.7%** of recently Certified PAs with a clinical position work in primary care: family medicine/general practice, general internal medicine and general pediatrics. This is a decrease from the previous year.

Overall, **26.7%** of certified PAs work in primary care.

**22.6%** of female recently Certified PAs chose a primary care specialty, while **23.1%** of males did so.

# Salary

Salary of recently Certified PAs who have accepted a position

## Number and Percent by Salary Range

Starting Salary Range	Number	Percent
Less than or equal to \$40,000	7	0.2%
\$40,001-\$50,000	18	0.5%
\$50,001-\$60,000	74	2.1%
\$60,001-\$70,000	74	2.1%
\$70,001-\$80,000	234	6.7%
\$80,001-\$90,000	836	24.1%
\$90,001-\$100,000	1,167	33.6%
\$100,001-\$110,000	630	18.1%
\$110,001-\$120,000	247	7.1%
\$120,001-\$130,000	115	3.3%
\$130,001-\$140,000	32	0.9%
More than \$140,000	39	1.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,473</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**Annual Salary**  
 Median: **\$95,000**  
 Mean: **\$94,643**

\*Note: 118 recently Certified PAs chose "Prefer not to answer"



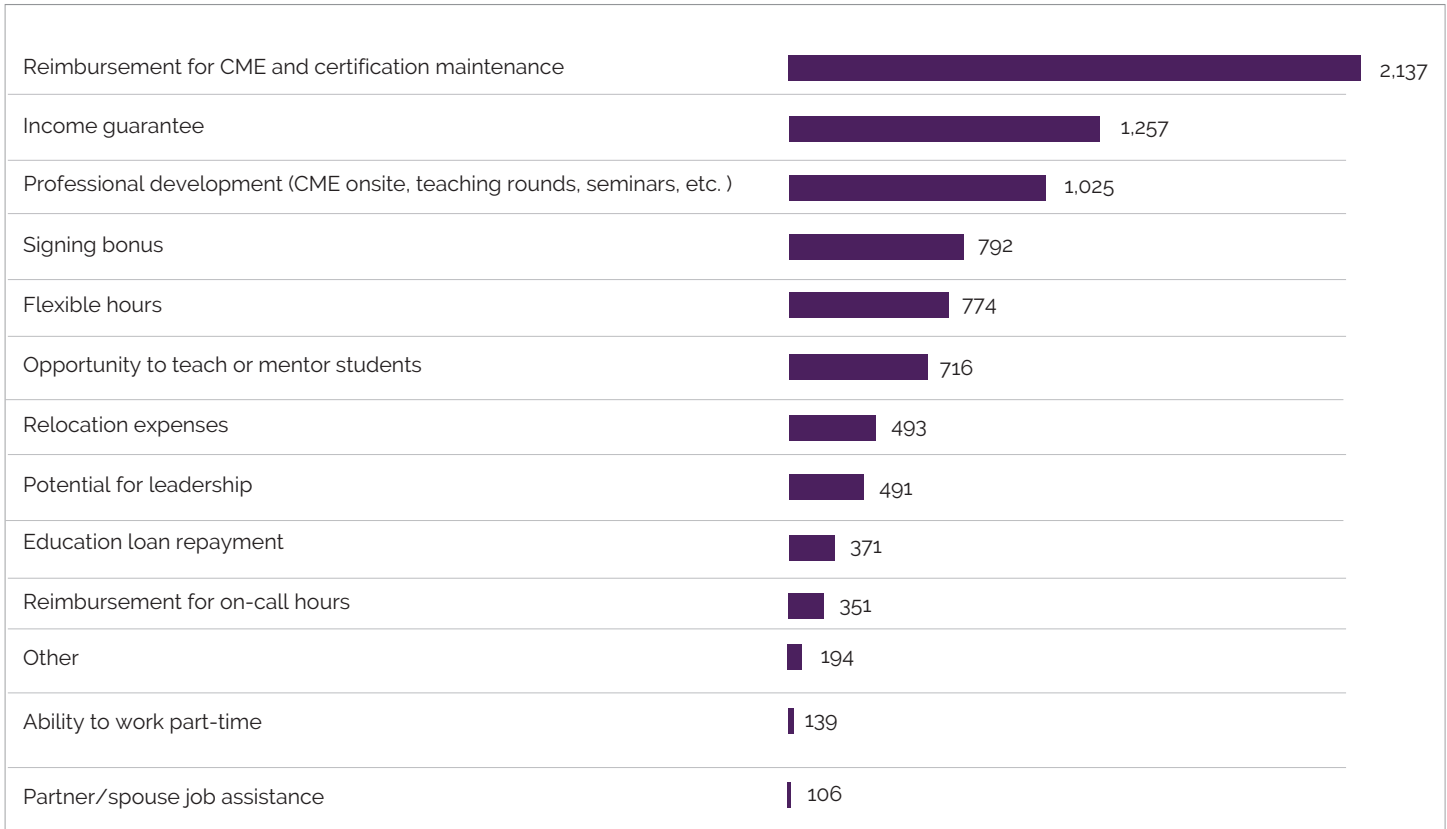
The median salary for both recently certified male and female PAs is **\$95,000**. The mean was higher for recently certified males than it was for females (\$97,592 and \$93,386 respectively.)

The highest salaries for recently Certified PAs were in radiation oncology, occupational medicine, gynecology, emergency medicine and psychiatry.



# Employment Incentives

## Incentives Offered to Recently Certified PAs



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one incentive.

**68.5%** of the recently Certified PAs who accepted a position indicated they were offered employment incentives.

When asked to rank order the top three incentives that most influenced their decision to accept the position they were in, the incentives that ranked in the top three were:

1. Income guarantee
2. Reimbursement for CME and certification maintenance
3. Flexible work hours

This differs from the graph above due to some incentives that were chosen but not ranked in the top three.



**Recently Certified Physician Assistants Who  
Have Not Accepted a Clinical Position**

## Challenges Faced by PAs Who Have Searched for a Job but Have Not Accepted One

Challenges faced in searching for a position; Reasons PAs have not searched for or accepted a position

### Challenges Faced by Recently Certified PAs Who Have Not Accepted a Position or Are Currently Searching for a Position

Challenges	Percent
Lack of clinical PA opportunities for recent graduates	34.2%
Lack of clinical PA opportunities in geographic area preferred	15.1%
Lack of clinical PA opportunities in preferred specialty	13.7%
Lack of clinical PA opportunities in preferred practice setting	11.6%
Abundance of PA graduates competing for same position	10.8%
Lack of clinical PA employment opportunities	4.3%
Inadequate salary and/or compensation offered	4.2%
Lack of positions that meet obligations for employment (i.e. NHSC)	1.8%
Lack of opportunities for spouse/partner	0.7%

**64.6%** of recently Certified PAs who have not searched for nor accepted a position stated that they decided to take time off before they began their career and **35.4%** cited other reasons.

**51.8%** who have searched for but have not accepted a position indicated they have not experienced challenges when searching for a job.

Lack of clinical PA opportunities for recent graduates and lack of clinical PA opportunities in geographic area preferred were the top two challenges cited from 2013-2017 for recently certified PAs, regardless of employment status.



## Reasons Recently Certified PAs Did Not Accept a Position Offered

### Reasons Recently Certified PAs Did Not Accept a Position

Reasons Cited	Number
Not in preferred area of practice	246
Insufficient compensation	140
Other reason	102
Did not feel it was a good personal match with potential supervisor	91
Insufficient benefits	80
Insufficient supervision onsite	50
Wanted PA to assume too much responsibility for their level of experience	42
Insufficient learning for continued professional growth	35
Would not allow physician assistant to sufficiently utilize the competencies gained from education	33
Too much on-call time	24



**31.1%** of recently Certified PAs who have searched for but not yet accepted a position indicated they have turned down at least one offer.

## Selection of Preferred Clinical Position Location

Geographic location preferred by recently Certified PAs who have not yet accepted a position

### Location if a Position Preferred by Physician Assistants who Have Not Accepted a Position

Geographic Location	Number
Area where grew up	725
Area lived in prior to attending PA program	595
Area where want to live	569
Area where PA program is located	553
Urban medically underserved area	200
Rural area	180
Other area	159



Recently Certified PAs prefer to work in the area in which they grew up. **31.5%** indicated they would prefer an area where their PA program is located.

# Hours Preferred to Work Per Week and Preferred Time Spent in Work Activities

Number of preferred working hours per week; Preferred proportion of time spent in different work activities

## Preferred Number of Hours to Work Per Week When PA Does Accept a Position

Preferred Work Hours Per Week	Number	Percent
1-10 hours	2	0.1%
11-20 hours	10	0.6%
21-30 hours	16	0.9%
31-40 hours	1,121	63.8%
41-50 hours	579	33.0%
More than 50 hours	28	1.6%

Note: 34.6% of recently Certified PAs who have not accepted a clinical position prefer to work more than 40 hours per week (less than in 2013 where 44.9% preferred work more than 40 hours per week.) Of those who have accepted a position, 46.9% report they expect to work more than 40 hours per week.

## Median Proportion of Time PAs Prefer to Spend in the Following Activities When They Begin Work

Direct patient care* (outpatient)	50%
Direct patient care* (inpatient)	30%
Indirect patient care**	10%
Volunteerism	5%
Quality improvement /patient safety	5%
Research	5%
Continuing education	5%
Teaching/precepting	5%
Administration***	5%
Other	5%

\*Face-to-face  
 \*\* Phone calls, reviewing labs, charting  
 \*\*\* Own practice, hospital committees

# Practice Setting Preferred by Recently Certified PAs Who Have Not Accepted a Position

## Number and Percent of Recently Certified PAs by Preferred Practice Setting

Practice Setting	Number	Percent
Hospital	753	42.9%
Office-based private practice	578	32.9%
Urgent care	83	4.7%
Community health center	31	1.8%
Ambulatory surgical center	23	1.3%
Rural health clinic	20	1.1%
Other	20	1.1%
Public or community health clinic (non-federally qualified)	12	0.7%
Veterans Administration (federal government)	11	0.6%
Behavioral/mental health facility	10	0.6%
United States Military (federal government)	8	0.5%
Indian health service (federal government)	5	0.3%
School-based or college-based health center or school clinic	3	0.2%
Free clinic	2	0.1%
Rehabilitation facility	2	0.1%
Bureau of prisons (federal government)	1	<0.1%
Home health care agency	1	<0.1%
Hospice	1	<0.1%
No preference	193	11.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,757</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**43.0%** of recently Certified PAs who have not accepted a position indicated they would prefer to work in a hospital setting, and **52.8%** who have accepted a position work in a hospital setting. **11%** had no preference or were undecided.

# Practice Area Preferred by Recently Certified PAs Who Have Not Accepted a Position

## Number and Percent of PAs by Preferred Practice Area

Specialty	Number	Percent
Addiction Medicine	3	0.2%
Adolescent Medicine	4	0.2%
Anesthesiology	0	0.0%
Critical Care Medicine	32	1.8%
Dermatology	104	5.9%
Emergency Medicine	322	18.3%
Family Medicine/ General Practice	328	18.7%
Gynecology	3	0.2%
Hospice and Palliative Medicine	1	<0.1%
Hospital Medicine	81	4.6%
Internal Medicine– General Practice	89	5.1%
Internal Medicine– Subspecialty	104	5.9%
Neurology	7	0.4%
Obstetrics and Gynecology	56	3.2%

\*Specialty included for the first time in 2017.

Specialty	Number	Percent
Occupational Medicine	0	0.0%
Ophthalmology	2	0.1%
Otolaryngology	5	0.3%
Pain Medicine	0	0.0%
Pathology	0	0.0%
Pediatrics	62	3.5%
Pediatrics– Subspecialties	45	2.6%
Physical Medicine/ Rehabilitation	2	0.1%
Preventive Medicine/ Public Health	4	0.2%
Psychiatry	17	1.0%
Radiation Oncology	2	0.1%
Radiology	5	0.3%
Surgery–General	81	4.6%
Surgery–Subspecialties	215	12.2%
Urology	2	0.1%
Other	31	1.8%
No Preference	149	8.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,756</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**27.3%** of recently Certified PAs who have not accepted a position would prefer to work in primary care are: family medicine/general practice, general internal medicine and general pediatrics. This is a decrease from 2014-2016.

**28.6%** of female recently Certified PAs who have not accepted a position would prefer a position in primary care, compared to **23.1%** of male Certified PAs who have not accepted a position.



## Salary Desired by PAs

Minimum salary desired by recently Certified PAs who have not accepted a position

### Number and Percent by Minimum Desired

Starting Salary Range	Number	Percent
Less than or equal to \$40,000	0	0.0%
\$40,001-\$50,000	1	<0.1%
\$50,001-\$60,000	3	0.2%
\$60,001-\$70,000	22	1.3%
\$70,001-\$80,000	141	8.2%
\$80,001-\$90,000	636	37.0%
\$90,001-\$100,000	637	37.0%
\$100,001-\$110,000	209	12.2%
\$110,001-\$120,000	46	2.7%
\$120,001 or more	25	1.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,720</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**16.4%** of recently Certified PAs who have not yet accepted a position indicate that the minimum salary they would accepted for their first position would be over \$100,000. For recently Certified PAs that have accepted a position, **30.5%** are earning over \$100,000.

# Employment Incentives Desired by Recently Certified PAs Who Have Not Accepted a Position

## Incentives Desired

Income guarantee	1,435
Reimbursement of CME and certification maintenance	1,295
Professional development (CME onsite, teaching rounds, seminars, etc.)	910
Education loan repayment	865
Flexible hours	864
Signing bonus	748
Reimbursement for on-call hours	551
Opportunity to teach or mentor students	517
Potential for leadership	404
Relocation expenses	342
Ability to work part-time	189
Other	85
Partner/spouse job assistance	78

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one incentive.



When asked to rank order the top three incentives they are looking for in their first clinical PA position, the top three were:

1. Income guarantee
2. Education loan repayment
3. Flexible hours

This differs from the chart above due to some incentives that were chosen but not ranked in the top three.

## Future Data on Certified PAs

NCCPA pursues a research agenda that focuses on its core activities and the ongoing evaluation and improvement of its exams and certification program. NCCPA is also committed to collaborating with external researchers to share data in appropriate and ethical ways to further advance the health and safety of the public or otherwise conduct useful research related to PAs. To facilitate research collaborations, NCCPA developed *Policies for the Review of Requests for Data and External Research Collaboration* and guidelines that describe the process external researchers will need to follow for submitting requests for data and how those requests will be reviewed. The policies and guidelines are provided on NCCPA's web site at <http://www.nccpa.net/Research>.

This *Statistical Profile of Recently Certified Physician Assistants* will be updated and published annually. In addition, there are supplementary reports that are currently available and updated annually. Those reports include:

- Statistical Profile of Certified Physician Assistants
- Statistical Profile of Certified Physician Assistants by Specialty
- Statistical Profile of Certified Physician Assistants by State

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This study is exempt from IRB review pursuant to the terms of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Policy for Protection of Human Research Subjects at 45 C.F.R. §46.101(b).

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