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**NCCPA: Five Ways Certified Physician Assistants Deliver Care  
*When Your Health Can't Wait***

***National PA Week Oct. 6-12 Showcases Value of PAs***

**Johns Creek, GA, Sept. 16, 2014** – Worried about long waits to see a doctor? Looking for a health care provider who has the knowledge, skills and time to help you and your family regain and maintain better health? Because “your health can’t wait,” the nation’s 100,000 certified physician assistants (PA-Cs) are treating over 7 million patients every week in every clinical setting, including doctor’s offices, emergency departments, surgical centers and hospitals.

According to a 2014 survey by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants ([NCCPA](#)), access to care when needed is the #1 concern of patients today. With National PA Week set for Oct. 6-12, NCCPA wants to help educate consumers about the important role PAs fulfill in making health care more available.

Five ways PAs contribute to Americans health care are:

- **Expanding access** by providing same day appointments for acute care visits. PAs can offset a physician’s fully-booked schedule by being available to see walk-in patients.
- **Serving as *the* primary care provider** with their own panel of patients. Although PAs collaborate with physicians, many have patients who ask for them by name and a full daily schedule of their own.
- **Providing care in remote and underserved areas.** PAs make economic sense for a health care system that cannot afford a physician in these areas. PAs allow patients to be cared for in their own communities, avoiding the hardships and cost of travel to major medical centers.
- **Delivering specialty care** in every area, including emergency medicine, cardiovascular and thoracic surgery, hospital medicine, orthopaedic surgery, nephrology, psychiatry and pediatrics. Two-thirds of PAs now work in specialties.
- **Performing home visits**, particularly with patients who need special attention or monitoring. PAs who are part of a Patient Centered Medical Home often have the opportunity to provide care where it is most convenient.

“We are often the linchpin of health care, providing coordination and continuity of care throughout the patient’s lifetime,” says Dawn Morton-Rias, Ed.D., PA-C, and president and CEO of NCCPA. “A healthy society is a working, productive society, and PAs contribute daily to the quality of health care in America.”

When seeing a certified PA, patients can be confident in the treatment they receive. Certified PAs must pass rigorous certification requirements – including regular retesting, are licensed by state medical boards and are held to the same high standards of care that physicians provide. Certified PAs obtain patient histories, conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, prescribe medication, counsel patients on preventative health care, assist in surgery, and perform a variety of procedures.

According to the US Dept. of Labor Statistics, the demand for PAs is expected to increase 38% in the next decade as the nation's health care system looks to expand access to more patients, including millions who are newly-insured and aging baby boomers who often have multiple, chronic conditions.

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### **About the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants**

The [National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants \(NCCPA\)](#) is the only certifying organization for 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. There are approximately 100,000 certified PAs in the U.S. today. In addition to its generalist credential, NCCPA launched its [Certificate of Added Qualifications \(CAQ\)](#) program in 2011, for certified physician assistants practicing in Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery, Emergency Medicine, Nephrology, Orthopaedic Surgery and Psychiatry; CAQs in two new specialties (Pediatrics and Hospital Medicine) launched in 2014. For more information, please call (678) 417-8100 or visit [www.NCCPA.net](http://www.NCCPA.net). Please visit us on [Facebook](#).

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