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Mental Health on the Forefront of Issues for Certified Physician Assistants

Leesburg, VA, June 13, 2017 – Six national Physician Assistant (PA) organizations came together this past week to identify how to impact the mental health crisis in this country. The PArtners in Mental Health Summit, attended by nearly three dozen healthcare leaders, resulted in a unified commitment to work together to address the challenges of identifying and treating this critical patient care issue. The six organizations included:

- Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the PA
- American Academy of PAs
- National Commission on Certification of PAs
- nccPA Health Foundation
- PA Education Association
- PA Foundation

Ted Wendel, Ph.D., chair of the board of the nccPA Health Foundation, notes that approximately one in five adults in the U.S experiences mental illness every year. He noted: “Certified PAs are on the front lines of healthcare treating over 8 million patients a week, many with chronic illnesses and multiple comorbidities. Mental illness is often associated with these conditions, and PAs have a unique opportunity to evaluate patients and offer a treatment or referral at this point of care.”

Leveraging a collective impact strategy, the six organizations acknowledged the need to engage and equip all PAs to address mental and behavioral health needs and developed a framework to create and implement programs that will enable them to do that.

The summit was convened and supported by the nccPA Health Foundation.

About the NCCPA and the nccPA Health Foundation

The [National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants \(NCCPA\)](#) is the only certifying organization for 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 more than 115,500 Certified PAs in the U.S. today.

The [nccPA Health Foundation](#) is a supporting organization of NCCPA. The nccPA Health Foundation is a charitable organization whose mission is to advance the role of Certified PAs to improve health. The Foundation is focused on building PA workforce capacity in the areas of mental health and wellness and oral health as part of overall health. It also funds grants to equip and encourage Certified PAs and PA students to promote more equitable care.