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New White Paper Examines Shift of Certified PAs into Specialty Practice *Focus on PAs as Highly Skilled Medical Providers*

Johns Creek, GA, Oct. 23, 2018 – Certified PAs carry a historic tradition of meeting America’s primary care needs, but as demographic shifts prompt the need for more specialty services, an overwhelming majority of the nation’s certified PAs are responding to the demand.

Today, more than 70 percent of certified PAs practice in specialty areas outside of primary care. These trends are outlined in a new white paper from the National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). According to [PAs in Specialty Practice: An Analysis of Need, Growth and Future](#) and the NCCPA [2017 Statistical Report of Certified Physician Assistants by Specialty](#), areas of high growth include surgical specialties, emergency medicine, hospital medicine and psychiatry. However, PAs practice in every specialty, including emerging areas such as hospice and palliative care.

The white paper examines marked shifts in PA practice patterns and explores how certified PAs are chipping away at provider shortages and increasing patient’s access to care. The report highlights that:

- Certified PAs practice in highly technical specialty areas as health care needs expand. For instance, the number of PAs who entered surgical specialties has increased by 70.1 percent since 2013.
- These PAs have the skills to meet evolving health care needs and treat the of growth of chronic and complex conditions among America’s aging population.
- More specialty medical practices rely on PAs to meet patient needs. One in four specialty medical practices employ PAs or NPs and nearly half of multispecialty practices employ them.
- The growth of the PA profession will be integral to relieving provider shortages. The percentage of PAs working in all practice specialties has grown 13 percent over the last three years.

Since PAs have the privilege to change specialties throughout their careers, they are increasingly turning to specialty practice to address new health care challenges. PAs can also choose to demonstrate their expertise, knowledge and skills, by earning a Certificate of Added Qualification (CAQ) in seven specialties: [Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery](#), [Emergency Medicine](#), [Hospital Medicine](#), [Nephrology](#), [Orthopaedic Surgery](#), [Pediatrics](#) and [Psychiatry](#).

“The prevalence of certified PAs in specialty areas of medicine means millions of patients are more likely to encounter a PA for treatment,” said Dawn Morton-Rias, Ed.D, PA-C, president and CEO of NCCPA. “We are uniquely prepared to meet patients’ needs because our generalist education and certification and recertification requirements encourage lifelong learning and designate a gold standard of care. We provide solutions from filling workforce needs, to

improving the quality and efficiency of patient care, to taking on leadership roles like overseeing observation units or creating telemedicine programs.”

The [white paper](#) and the [2017 Statistical Report on Certified PAs by Specialty](#) are available on www.nccpa.net.

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 more than 123,000 certified PAs in the U.S. today. NCCPA also administers the Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) program for experienced, Certified PAs practicing in seven specialties. For more information, visit www.PAsDoThat.net.