

AAPA and You: Beginning Your PA Journey

Rebecca Jacobs

Pre-PA and Student Membership Coordinator

About AAPA

ADVOCATE and **EDUCATE**
on behalf of PAs and their
patients.

Ensure professional
GROWTH, personal
EXCELLENCE, and
RECOGNITION of PAs.

Enhance PA's ability to
improve the **QUALITY**,
ACCESSIBILITY, and
COST-EFFECTIVENESS
of healthcare.

4,000
PRE-PA MEMBERS



20,000
STUDENT MEMBERS



70,000
TOTAL MEMBERS





Full video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7aPOW6ZSJM&list=PL_4icMQNmxTyKV6Om7kXC4Xode57p6k&index=1

WHAT IS A PA?



#PAsGoBeyond

**She's not just a sprained wrist.
She's Sophie.**

AAPA
American Academy of
Physician Associates

AAPA
American Academy of
Physician Associates

Scope of practice is determined by...

Education and experience

State and federal laws

Employer/facility policies

Patient needs

- Serve as a patient's primary care provider
- Deliver babies
- Diagnose and treat illnesses
- Develop treatment plans
- Lead healthcare teams
- Become a healthcare executive
- Prescribe medications
- First assist in surgery
- Make rounds in hospitals and nursing homes
- Practice telehealth
- Practice in multiple specialties
- Order and interpret tests
- Own a private practice
- Solve a public health crisis
- Conduct research
- Perform major medical procedures
- Become an astronaut (yes, really!)
- Perform major medical procedures
- Become an entrepreneur
- Work in education or administration
- Take medical histories
- Conduct physical exams
- Counsel on preventative care

PAs Practice in Every Setting



American Academy of
Physician Associates

51%

Outpatient
Office or
Clinic

38%

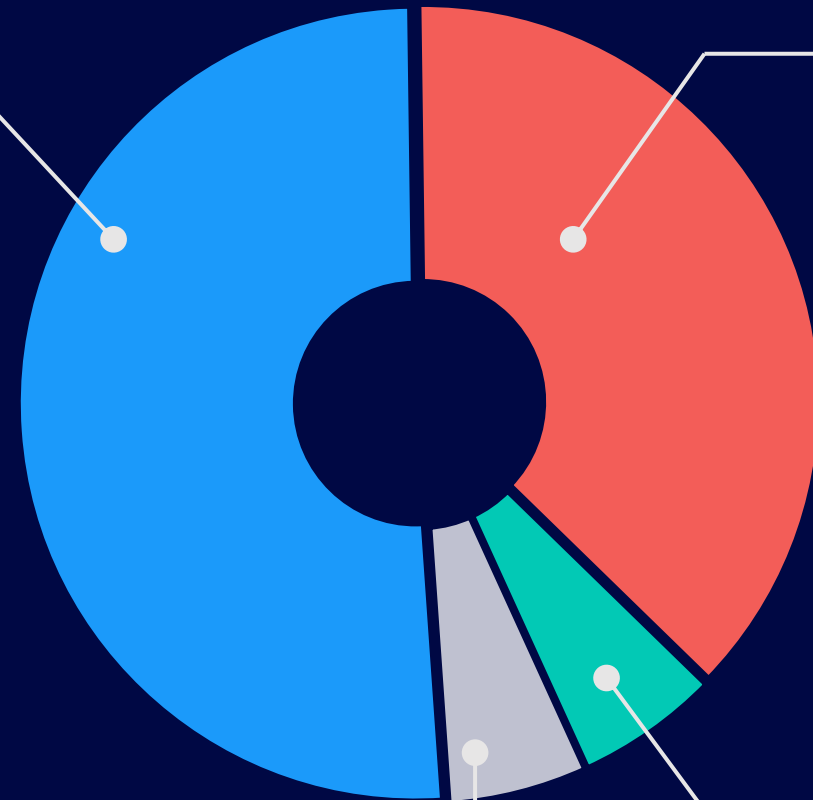
Hospital

6%

Urgent Care
Center

5%

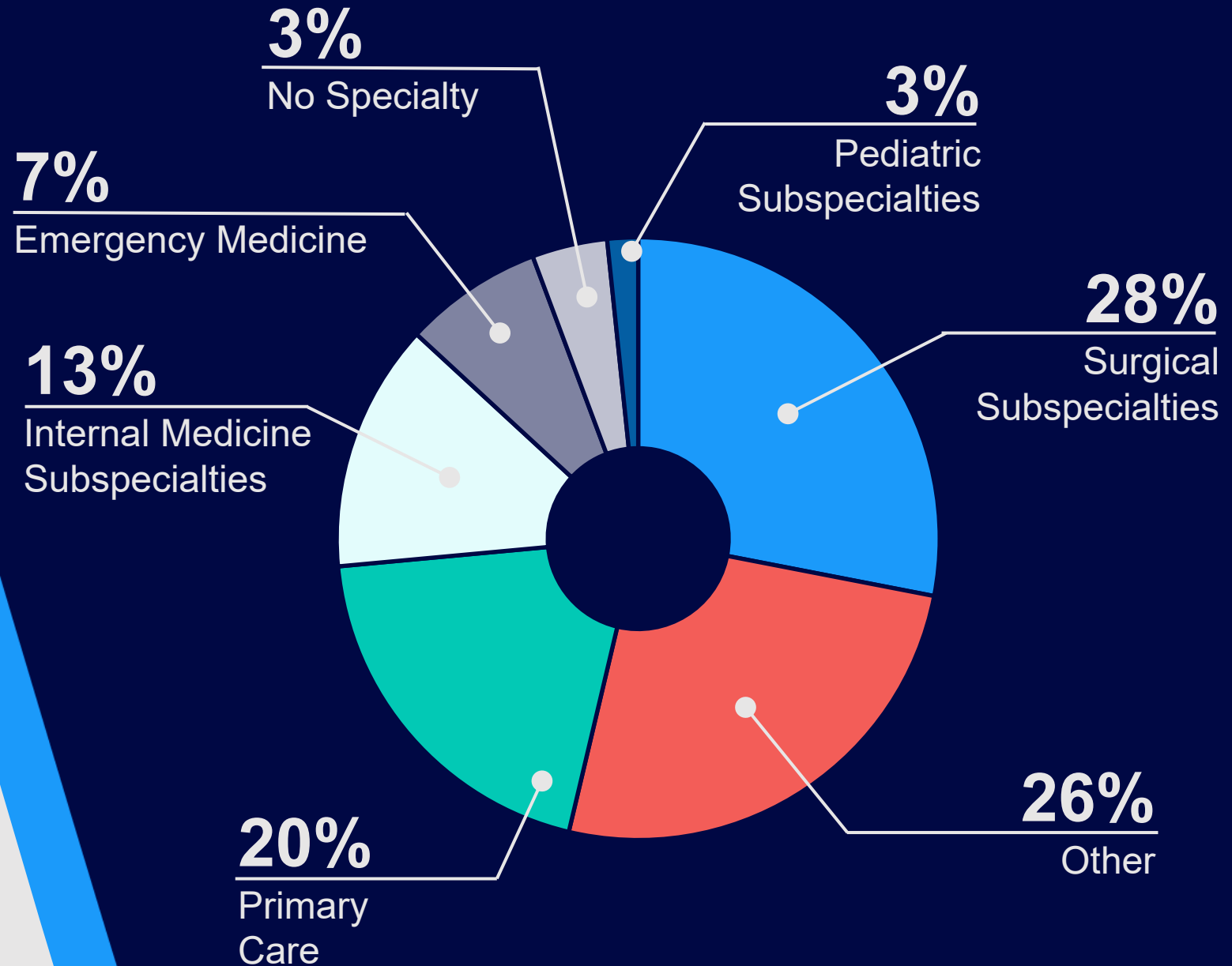
Other



PAs Practice in Every Specialty



American Academy of
Physician Associates



Areas of Practice Guide



OVERVIEW

EDUCATION AND CME

RESOURCES

ARTICLES

NETWORKING AND JOBS

WORDS FROM THE FIELD

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Administration

Cardiology

Critical Care

Dermatology

Education

Emergency Medicine

Family Medicine

Hospital Medicine

Internal Medicine

Orthopaedic Surgery

Obstetrics and Gynecology

Psychiatry

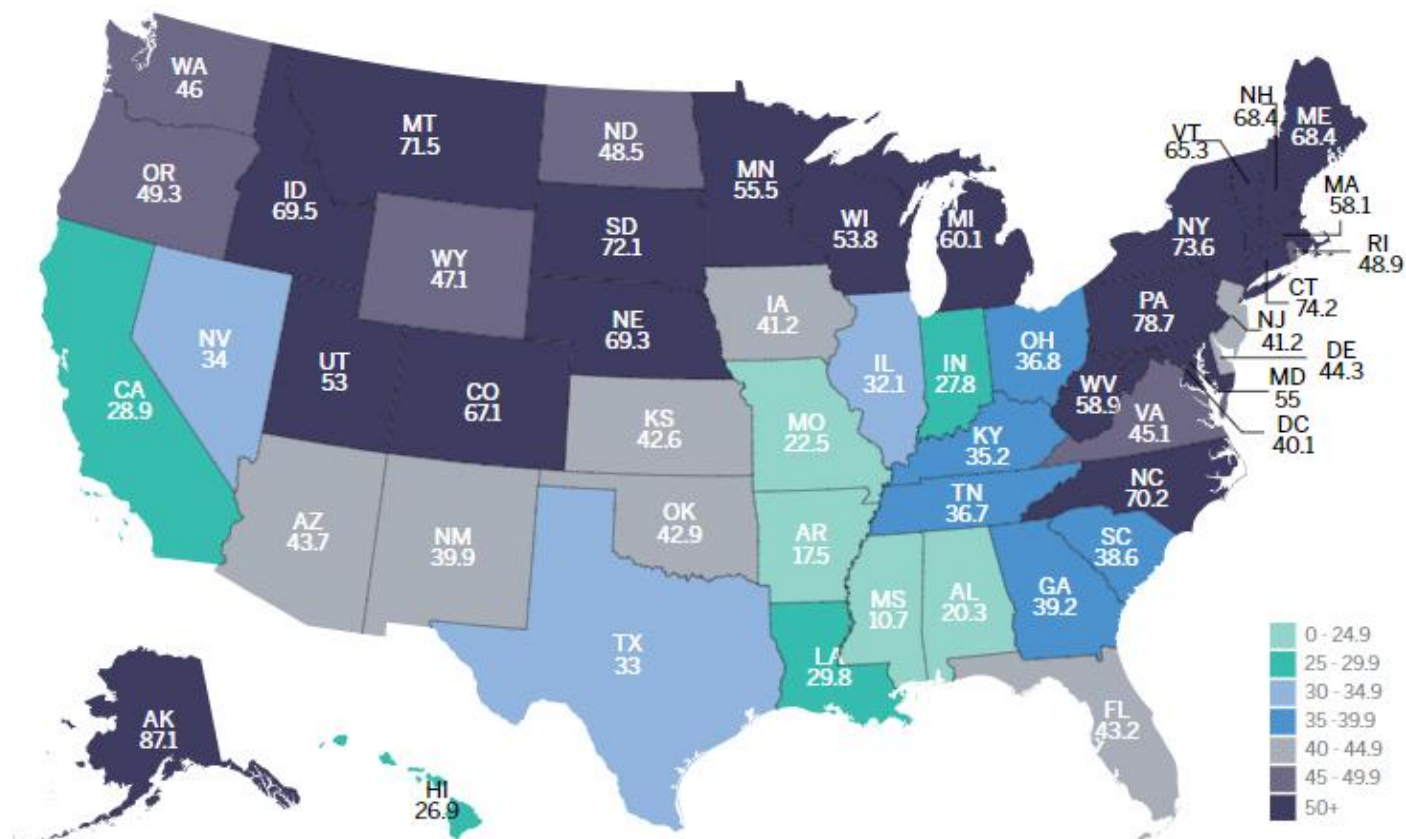
Telemedicine

Urgent Care



PA PROFESSION OVERVIEW

Distribution of Certified PAs, Per Capita By State



Numbers of PAs per 100,000 population
Source: NCCPA 2021

178K

PHYSICIAN
ASSOCIATES

514M

PATIENT
INTERACTIONS
PER YEAR

PA DEMAND AND PREDICTIONS

31%

Predicted Growth
by 2030

1

8/10

Job Market Score

2

#2

HEALTHCARE JOB

2

#3

BEST JOB OVERALL

2

89%

Would Recommend
a Career as a PA

2

8/10

Work/Life Balance

¹U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

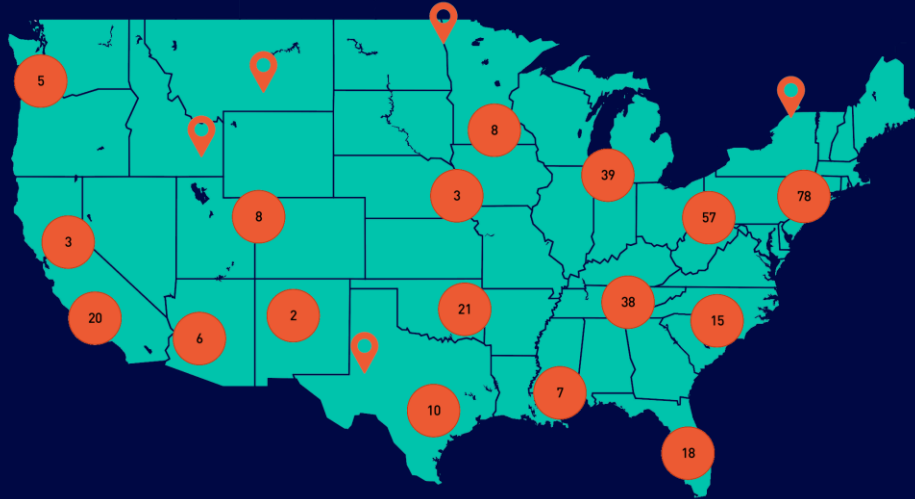
²U.S. News & World Report



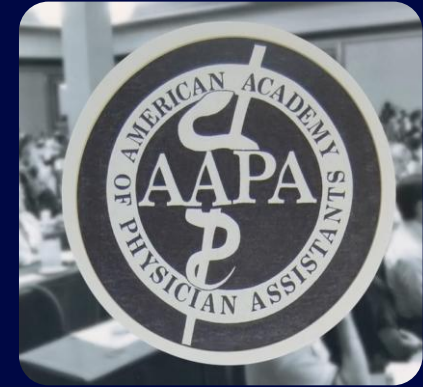
Becoming a PA

PA EDUCATION

311 Accredited PA Programs



History

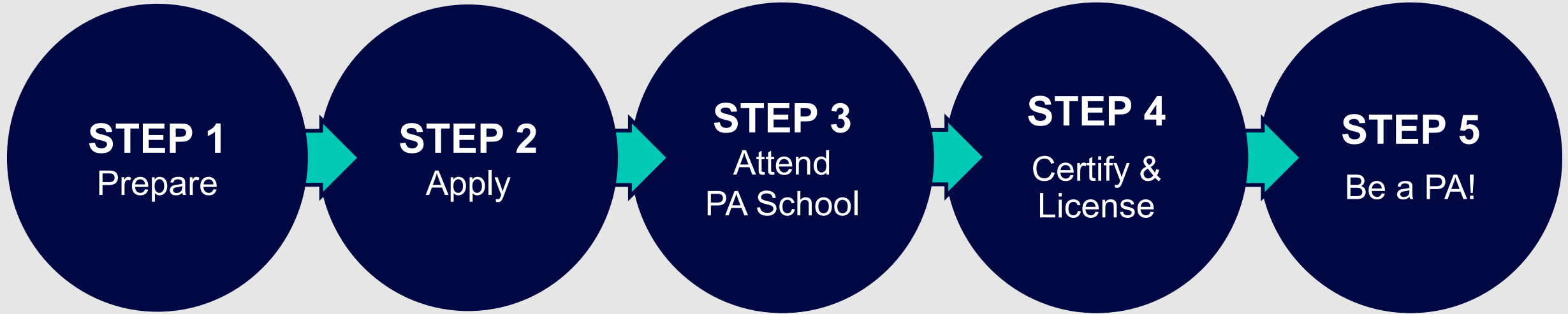


PAEA Program Directory
<https://paeaonline.org/our-programs>

My PA Box



BECOMING A PA



STEP 1: PREPARE

Source: PAEA Prerequisite 2021 Website Analysis. Reflects most or some PA programs, but not all.

Research PA Programs

Type: public, private, hybrid, military

Program Length: ranges 24-60 months per program, usually 3 academic years

Class Size: ranges 16-140 students per class

Degree Requirements: 78% require Bachelor's degree

Program Types: pre-professional track, no pre-professional track, early assurance

International Applicants: accepted by 84% of programs

Veteran Pathways: supported by 75.5% of programs

Prerequisites Coursework

- Anatomy
- Biochemistry
- Biology
- Microbiology
- Chemistry
- Organic Chemistry
- Physiology
- Psychology
- Statistics
- Genetics
- English Composition/Writing
- Medical Terminology

Healthcare Experience

Direct patient care: ranges 80-2500 hours minimum, required by 68%, preferred by 21%

Other healthcare experience: ranges 30-2000 hours minimum, required by 48%, preferred by 33%

Shadowing: ranges 4-250 hours minimum, required by 22%, preferred by 39%

Tests

PA-CAT, GRE, TOEFL, CASPer, SAT, ACT, MCAT

TIP:
Plan early to meet program requirements.

STEP TWO: APPLY

Source: PAEA Prerequisite 2021 Website Analysis. Reflects most or some PA programs, but not all.

Applying to the Program

- CASPA application
- Narrative or Personal Statement
- Written References
 - Minimum required ranges from 2-3
 - Sources include PAs, Academic references, Physicians, Other Healthcare Providers, Supervisors
- Supplemental Application
 - Required by 50% of programs
 - May include a fee of 25-125 USD
- On-Site Interview (88%)
- Deposit Required to Secure Seat (90%)
 - Ranges from 100-2000 USD, usually nonrefundable



Lean on AAPA!

PA School Application Checklist and Timeline



Checklist

GETTING STARTED

RESEARCHING PA PROGRAMS

PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

COMPLETING PREREQUISITES

GAINING EXPERIENCE

COMPLETING ENTRANCE EXAMS

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

WHAT COMES NEXT?

FULL CHECKLIST

Preparing Your Application

Follow these next steps as you prepare to apply for PA school:

- ✓ Write your personal statement.
- ✓ Order your transcripts.
- ✓ Ask for recommendation letters from your professors, faculty members, and supervising PAs.
- ✓ Complete additional or supplemental applications.
- ✓ Meet prerequisite coursework, experience, and entrance exam requirements for each program.

As you prepare your application, review each program's unique application components. In addition to prerequisites and experience, applications will likely have additional requirements, such as recommendation letters, a personal statement, transcripts, and supplemental applications. Here are some important details you should know:

Personal Statements:

Personal statements are a critical piece of your application and should be written carefully. Begin preparing your personal statement well in advance of CASPA opening so that you have time for proper reflection and review.

While each school has their own guidelines for the personal essay, CASPA typically provides a single prompt: "Please explain why you are interested in being a PA." Some programs provide at least one additional (usually optional) essay prompt.

Here are some things to

- Tell a meaningful and
- Explain why, how, and
- Explain your interest
- If you are transitioning
- Describe your dedication
- Cover any deficiencies
- Use a spelling/grammar

Timeline

This timeline is highly generalized. Application deadlines vary, and may range from June to April.

GETTING STARTED

5 MONTHS BEFORE APPLYING

4 MONTHS BEFORE APPLYING

3 MONTHS BEFORE APPLYING

2 MONTHS BEFORE APPLYING

SUBMISSION

1-2 MONTHS AFTER APPLYING

2-5 MONTHS AFTER APPLYING

5-8 MONTHS AFTER APPLYING

AFTER PROGRAM ACCEPTANCE

5-8 Months After Applying

- A handful of programs accept applications until April of the following year, so you may still be waiting on acceptance letters, participating in interviews, and making decisions about where to attend.
- **Reapplicants:** Many applicants are not successful after the first cycle. Assess your application and plan for reapplication if necessary. Consider your application's strengths and weaknesses, including whether you need to retake prerequisites, gain more patient care or health care experience, retake entrance exams, or improve your personal statement. Don't give up! [Hear from others](#) to stay inspired and [find support](#) from a mentor.

Lean on AAPA!

PRE-PA RECORD KEEPER



- Shadowing
- Patient Care Experience
- Health Care Experience
- Volunteering
- Awards and Publications
- Memberships
- Licenses and Certifications
- Research
- Extracurriculars
- Leadership
- Teaching Experience

Trivia Time!

Q: Which is NOT likely to be a PA program prerequisite?

A	Anatomy and Physiology
B	Microbiology
C	Stage Acting
D	Psychology
E	Medical Terminology

Trivia Time!

Q: What program should you use when applying to PA programs?

A	College Board
B	CASPA
C	Indeed
D	The Program Website
E	AAPA

Trivia Time!

Q: Which level of education will an accredited PA program provide?

A	High School Degree
B	Certificate
C	Bachelors Degree
D	Masters Degree
E	Doctorate Degree

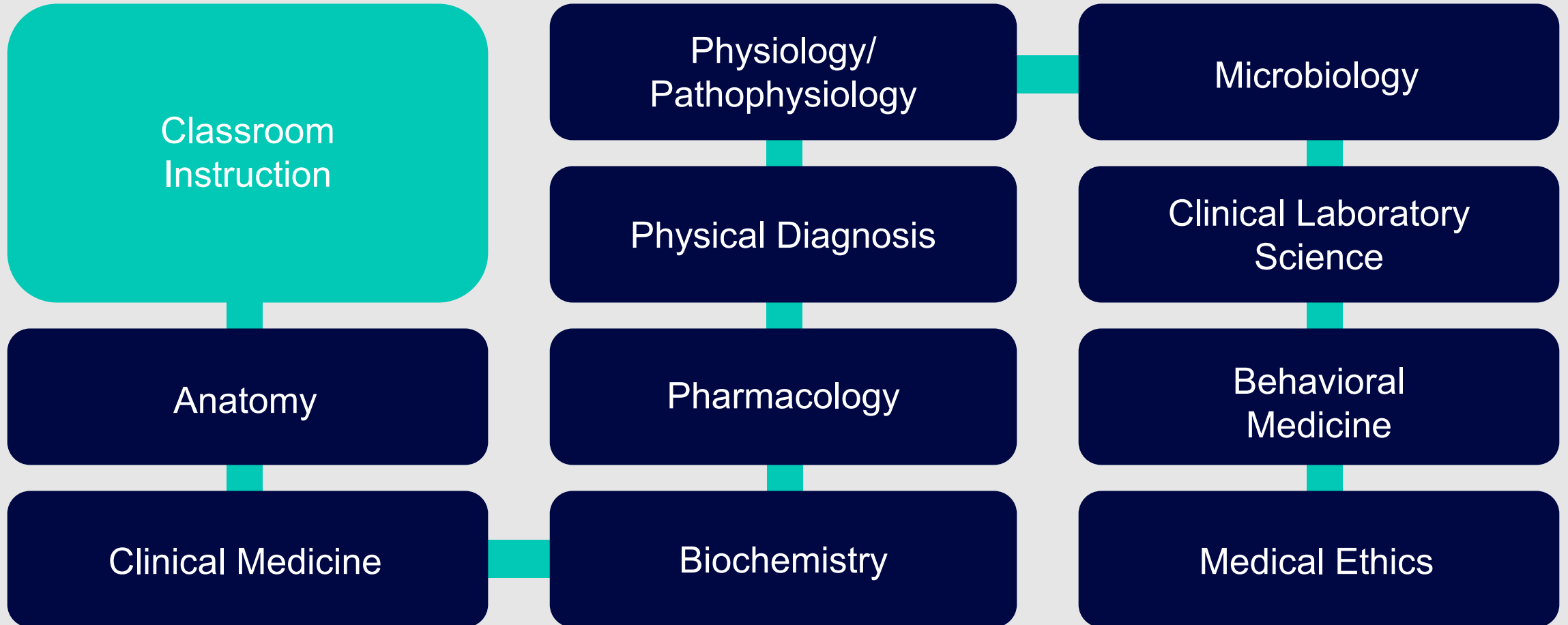
Trivia Time!

**Q: What does
“Didactic”
mean?**

A	A type of duck
B	A dental procedure that must be completed every 6 months.
C	Designed or intended to teach people something.
D	The first half of PA school (~13 months long, in a classroom) where PA students are taught medical knowledge, clinical reasoning skills, and how to apply that knowledge to clinical situations.

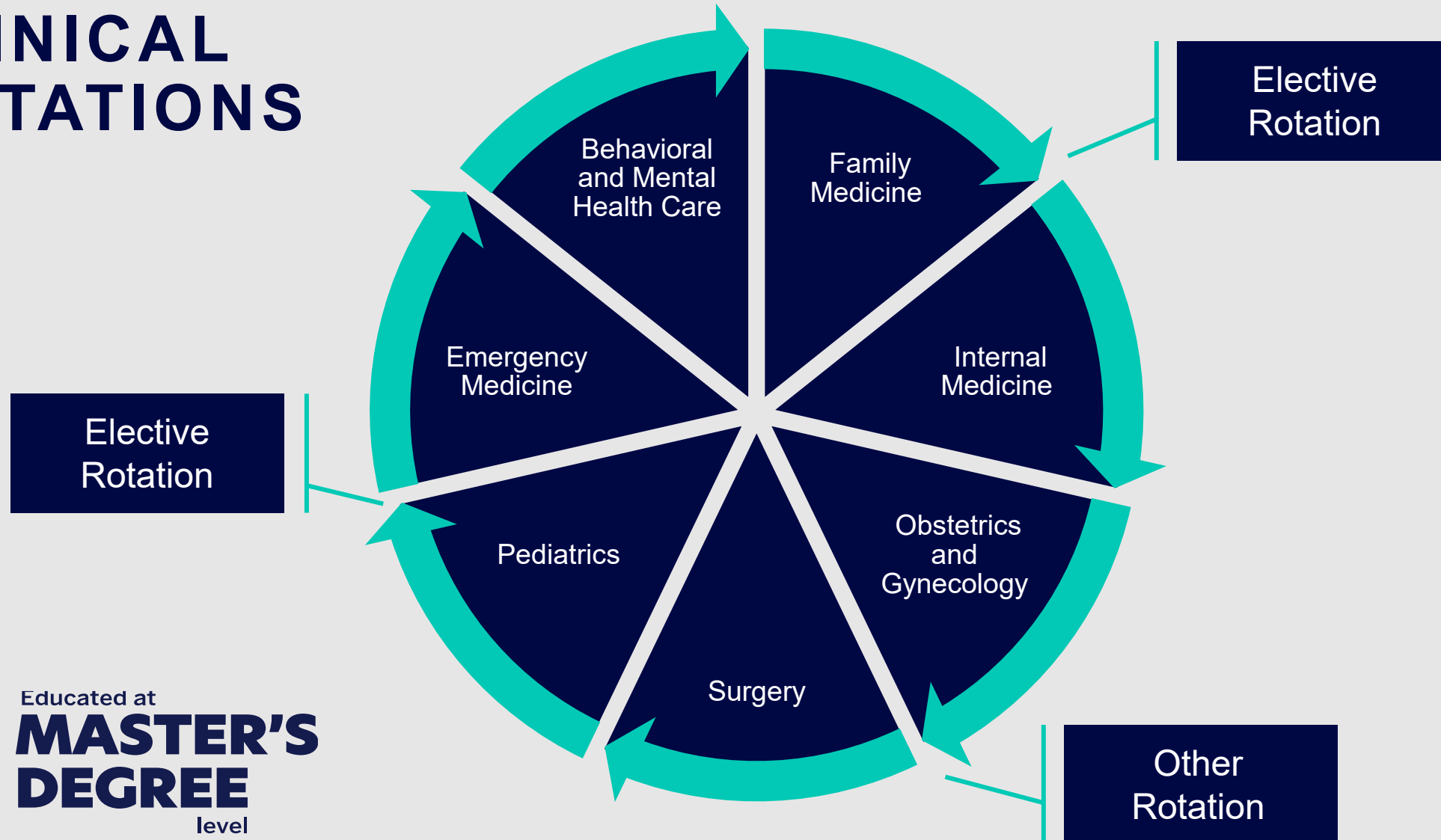
STEP THREE: ATTEND PA SCHOOL

DIDACTIC YEAR



STEP THREE: ATTEND PA SCHOOL

CLINICAL ROTATIONS



Educated at
**MASTER'S
DEGREE**
level

STEP FOUR: Certify and License

STEP FIVE: Be a PA!

Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE)

- 300 multiple-choice exam assessing basic medical and surgical knowledge
- Administered by National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)
- Must be taken within 6 years of graduating from an ARC-PA accredited PA program
- You can now use the PA-C designation!

All states require graduation from an accredited program and PA-C designation for licensing.

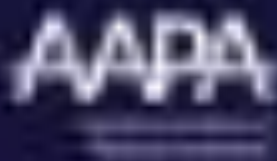
- See state licensing requirements on AAPA's website

Maintain Your Board Certification

- 100 hours of CME credits are required every two years
- Must take a recertification exam (PANRE or PANRE-LA) every 10 years

Is PA school worth it?

Is PA school worth it?





American Academy of
Physician Associates

AAPA Membership:
Supporting your
journey to PA school

AAPA Pre-PA Membership



**ARE YOU ON THE PATH
TO BECOMING A PA?**

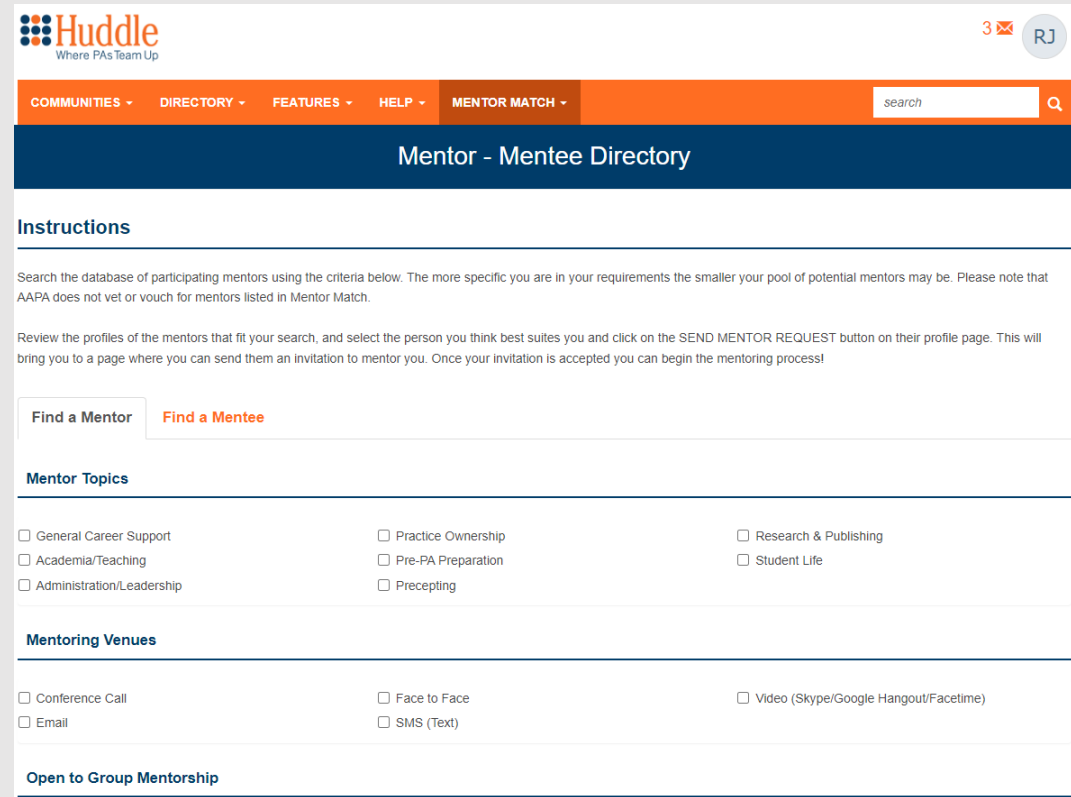
Full Video Here: https://youtu.be/ag0Qg8SH_Ag



Hi all,
I'm Sam!

Can someone
help me with a
question?

I'd love to connect with
anyone specializing in
pediatrics.



Huddle
Where PAs Team Up

3

COMMUNITIES ▾ DIRECTORY ▾ FEATURES ▾ HELP ▾ MENTOR MATCH ▾

Mentor - Mentee Directory

Instructions

Search the database of participating mentors using the criteria below. The more specific you are in your requirements the smaller your pool of potential mentors may be. Please note that AAPA does not vet or vouch for mentors listed in Mentor Match.

Review the profiles of the mentors that fit your search, and select the person you think best suits you and click on the SEND MENTOR REQUEST button on their profile page. This will bring you to a page where you can send them an invitation to mentor you. Once your invitation is accepted you can begin the mentoring process!

Find a Mentor **Find a Mentee**

Mentor Topics

☐ General Career Support	☐ Practice Ownership	☐ Research & Publishing
☐ Academia/Teaching	☐ Pre-PA Preparation	☐ Student Life
☐ Administration/Leadership	☐ Precepting	

Mentoring Venues

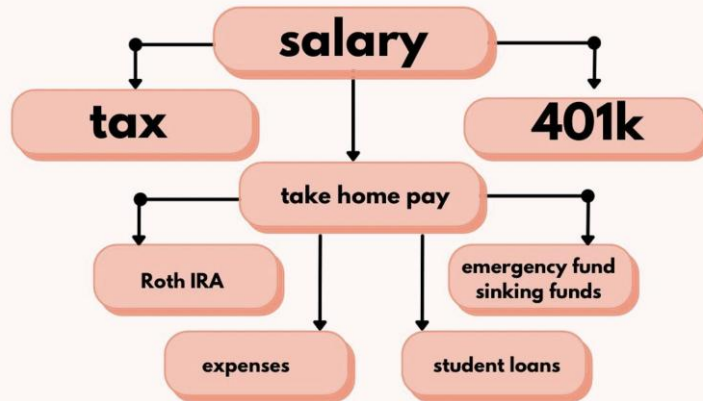
☐ Conference Call	☐ Face to Face	☐ Video (Skype/Google Hangout/Facetime)
☐ Email	☐ SMS (Text)	

Open to Group Mentorship



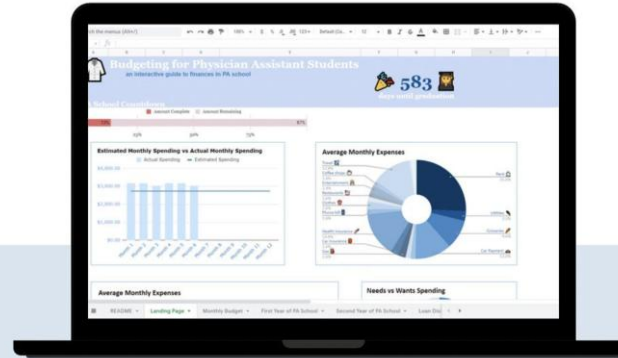
make your money multi-task

automate your finances to balance all of your financial goals



Budget Spreadsheet

get confident about your finances in PA school with our customizable spreadsheet for PA students



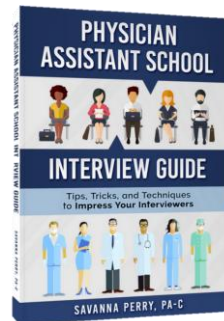
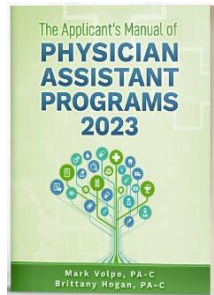
@PAMONEYSENSE

WHAT DOES IT COST TO BECOME A PA-C?

+ DEA
+ PANCE
+ LICENSE



Member Discounts and Perks



Pre-PA Resources and Guides

- Application Timeline & Checklist
- Pre-PA Record Keeper
- JAAPA digital subscription
- PA-Central newsletter
- Career Central resource library

8 Networking Tips for PAs

Access a network of 60,000 PAs

January 22, 2020

By Kate Maloney

Whether you're a new PA graduate, a seasoned PA looking for exposure to a new specialty, or you're having to move across the country because of family commitments, networking will play an important role in landing the position that's right for you. Don't worry if you haven't had to recently think about your network. In a high-demand, in-demand field, and, in our increasingly connected world, networking is essential.

[Connect with 60,000 PAs who can relate to your experiences]

1. Research in-person networking opportunities specifically for PAs

AAPA's annual conference offers a number of career-related events such as networking sessions, and meet us in New York City.

What Every Pre-PA Needs to Know About PA School Interviews

By Katie Bean, DMS, PA-C and Beth Macintire, DMS, PA-C

PA school is a high demand and growing quickly – and if you're applying to PA school, you're in good company, in fact! The number of applicants applying to PA school is growing, and the competition is fierce. If a PA program has offered you an interview, you're halfway there! It's normal to feel elated, nervous, and anxious when you receive an interview. After all, it's probably the most important interview of your life.

Over 27,283 applicants applied to PA schools and the average matriculation rate was 10% according to the Physician Assistant Education Association. Since not all candidates are accepted, making it to this step is a huge win. If the admission committee chooses to interview you, this means they were impressed enough by your background, qualifications to want to meet you. Now it's time to prepare!

The interview process can be as confusing and complicated as the application process. Some schools use a one-on-one interview format, while some turn to multiple mini-interviews (MMI) to assess your skills. Essays, quizzes, and group work are common, and every school has their own interview process. So how do you prepare for PA school interviews if everything is

4 Ways to Maximize Your Gap Year as a Pre-PA Student

By Katie Bean, DMS, PA-C and Beth Macintire, DMS, PA-C



As a pre-PA (physician associate/physician assistant) student, you may find yourself contemplating taking a gap year. This can be a valuable opportunity to gain crucial medical knowledge and strengthen your application before applying to PA school. A gap year can provide tremendous personal and professional growth, and help you become a well-rounded candidate and competitive PA program applicant. It's important this time is used wisely to increase the chances of being accepted to PA school. Let's explore some ways to maximize a gap year as a pre-PA student.

1. Gain Clinical Experience

While many students may have already acquired some clinical exposure during their undergraduate studies, a gap year allows students to deepen their understanding of patient care. Seeking opportunities with direct hands-on patient care, such as working as a back office medical assistant (OMA) or emergency medical technician (EMT), will allow you to expand your clinical skills and knowledge. Many programs require a minimum number of patient care hours (PCE) as a requirement before applying, so this can be a great time for you to gain those hours and become a more competitive pre-PA applicant.

How to Find PA Shadowing in the Era of COVID-19

Shadowing hours can strengthen your PA School application and show the admission committee you understand the unique role PAs play in healthcare. Here are three ways you can secure shadowing hours.

Accrue Healthcare Experience and Patient Care Experience Before Applying to PA School

Accruing Healthcare Experience (HCE) and Patient Care Experience (PCE) hours is one of the most time-intensive aspects of applying to PA school. Here are recommendations to obtain these patient-related work hours.



American Academy of
Physician Associates

Pre-PA Webinar Series




**Pre-PA's Path to
Financial Health**


**CASPA 101: Everything
Pre-PAs Need to Know**

April 20, 2023 11:00 AM ET


**Top Mistakes to Avoid When
Applying to PA School**

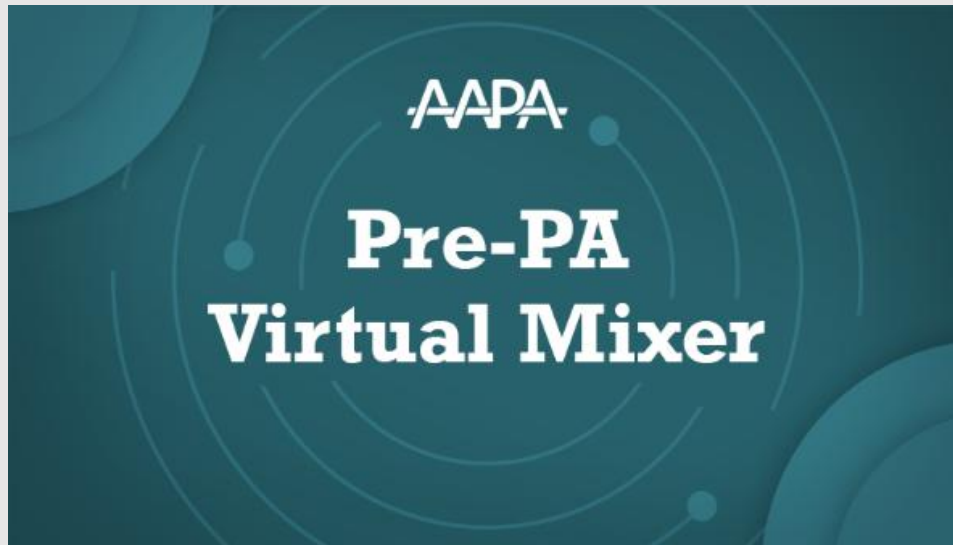

Surgery


Dermatology


**Mental Health
and Psychiatry**



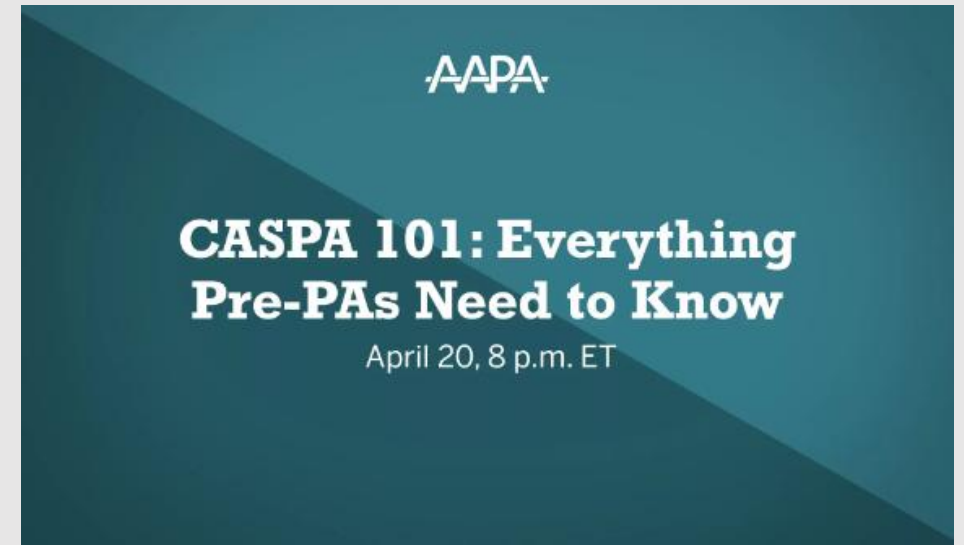
PA Like a Pro Webinar Series



Hosted in October

**Connect with practicing
PAs and PA students.**

- Choosing the right PA program,
- Finding + building experience,
- Application + admissions support,
- Financing your PA education, and
- What to expect in PA school.



Hosted in April

**Navigate the PA school
application process.**

- Creating a successful application
- Application details
- Mistakes to avoid

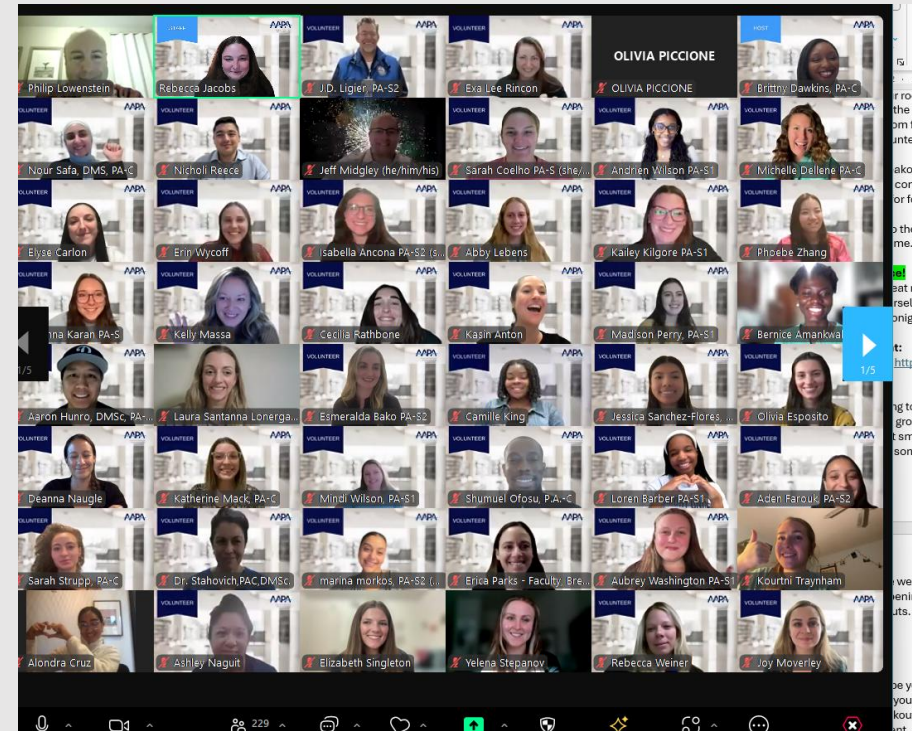
Upcoming Event for Pre-PAs:

2025 Pre-PA Virtual Mixer

November 5th, 7-8pm ET



Registration
Now Open



AAPA 2026 Conference

Become a PA: Pre-PA Workshop



New Orleans, LA
May 16, 2025

Topics covered:

- Profession trends and projections
- PA program overview
- Sessions/panels with current PA students, PAs and PA educators
- Resource fair
- Career skill building

\$49 members, \$79 nonmembers



Pre-PA Membership

\$50/year

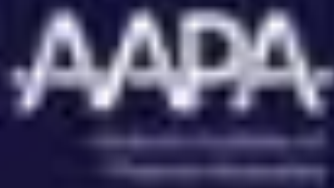
Scan QR Code
or visit aapa.org



Create a free
account for
limited access!

Tips for Success from Current PA Students

Advice for
Pre-PA Students



Full Video Here: <https://youtu.be/P-cgBfGRKhY>

Share in the chat...

Why do you want to be a PA?

**I want to
help others.**

**I want to
provide
accessible
care to
underserved
communities.**

**I want a
supportive
work/life
balance.**

**I want to
be like the
PAs that
inspire me.**

Thank you.

Website: aapa.org

Instagram: [@aapaorg](https://www.instagram.com/aapaorg)

Twitter: [@AAPAorg](https://twitter.com/AAPAorg)

Facebook: [@American Academy of Physician Associates](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanAcademyofPhysicianAssociates)

LinkedIn: [American Academy of Physician Associates](https://www.linkedin.com/company/AmericanAcademyofPhysicianAssociates)

Rebecca Jacobs

Student and Pre-PA Membership Coordinator

rjacobs@aapa.org

