# Table of Contents

*Director’s Welcome* ................................................................. 3

*The Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant Program* .................. 4

  **Introduction** .................................................................................. 4

  **The CHA/PA Program Mission, Vision and Goals** ......................... 4
  - Mission Statement ........................................................................... 4
  - Vision Statement ............................................................................ 4
  - Goals/Strategic Priorities ................................................................. 5

  **Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant Program Graduate Competencies** ...... 5

  **Becoming a Professional** .............................................................. 8

  **The CHA/PA Program Curriculum** ............................................. 8

  **The CHA/PA Program Website – medschool.ucdenver.edu/paprogram** .......... 9

  **History of the CHA/PA Program** ................................................ 10
  - Dr. Henry K. Silver – Our Founder ............................................... 10

  **Student Organizations of the CHA/PA Program** .......................... 11

*The Physician Assistant Profession* ............................................. 13

  **The Physician Assistant Concept** ............................................. 13

  **Certification of Physician Assistants** ......................................... 14

  **The Physician Assistant Code of Ethics** ................................... 15

  **The Physician Assistant Profession Oath** .................................. 17

  **Physician Assistant Professional Organizations** ......................... 18
  - American Academy of Physician Assistants ................................ 18
  - Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants .... 19
  - Physician Assistant Specialty Organizations and Caucuses ............... 19
  - Physician Assistant Education Association .................................. 19
  - Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants ................................ 20
Director’s Welcome

Welcome to the Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant Program, the Department of Pediatrics, the School of Medicine and the University of Colorado Denver Anschutz Medical Campus. This is an incredibly exciting time for you, the PA Program and the profession. We are confident that you will find that you have chosen an excellent program to launch your professional career.

The CHA/PA Program is a leader in medical education, having received numerous awards for excellence in education. The CHA/PA Program has introduced many innovative teaching strategies that have become an integral part of the School of Medicine curriculum including early introduction of clinical experience, problem-based learning, rural track training as well as psychosocial and evidence-based medicine. The CHA/PA educational program is flexible and dynamic, as we strive to be responsive to a rapidly changing health care environment. You will soon recognize that our campus is equally dynamic.

You are beginning a life-long journey as a Physician Assistant, joining over 900 graduates who now provide important health care to our nation’s children and families. Over the next three years you will grow to appreciate that you have chosen a profession where you will never stop learning. The faculty is here to support you in this first phase of your journey and to help you master the skills you will need for lifelong learning. Your success is important to us and we appreciate your choice of the CHA/PA Program.

Jonathan Bowser
Program Director
The Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant Program

Introduction

Established in 1968 by Dr. Henry K. Silver, the Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant (CHA/PA) Program is a Master’s level, primary care PA curriculum preparing graduates to provide comprehensive medical care for patients of all ages with expanded training in the care of infants, children and adolescents. The program graduated the first class in 1972 and was the first PA program to award a Master’s degree in 1973. The Program has maintained continuous ARC-PA accreditation since 1972 and continuous funding from the Health Resources Services Administration Bureau of Health Professions for more than 25 years. In 2002, the CHA/PA Program became the first degree granting program with expanded facilities at the Anschutz Medical Campus.

Although the program continues an emphasis on pediatrics, the Program’s primary care curriculum prepares graduates to diagnose and treat illness in patients of all ages. Functioning within the university’s School of Medicine, the program has gained national recognition for its innovative curriculum. Problem-based learning, evidence-based medicine and an extensive psychosocial medicine curriculum are successful components of the course of study. Clinical experience during the first year of training has been an integral part of the CHA/PA Program since its inception. The Program awards a professional master’s degree (MPAS-Pediatrics) which permits graduates to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam.

Physician Assistants have functioned as colleagues of physicians and other allied health professionals, providing comprehensive health services, including not only the evaluation and treatment of medical disease, but also patient education and counseling, anticipatory guidance and management of behavioral, psychosocial and developmental disorders. Program graduates are employed in all areas of primary and subspecialty areas of practice including pediatrics, family medicine, orthopedics, surgery, emergency medicine, urgent care, otolaryngology, allergy and asthma, neurology, neonatology, child protection and advocacy, and many other areas.

The CHA/PA Program Mission, Vision and Goals

Mission Statement
The mission of the Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant Program is to provide comprehensive physician assistant education in primary care across the lifespan, with expanded training in pediatrics and care of the medically underserved.

Vision Statement
The UC Denver, School of Medicine Physician Assistant Program will be a leading educational program with a national reputation for excellence in innovative curriculum, research and scholarship, community engagement and clinical care.
Goals/Strategic Priorities

- Deliver an outstanding and innovative educational experience in primary care across the lifespan
- Train health care providers who excel in collaborative multidisciplinary inter-professional health care teams
- Educate health care professionals who will serve as leaders within the community at all levels -- locally, nationally, and globally with a commitment to the underserved
- Develop a community of scholars who will be life-long learners and teachers
- Enhance program-wide diversity and foster a culture of inclusion
- Conduct educational research and scholarship
- Responsibly secure the resources to achieve our vision
- Maximize the opportunities of our consolidated university and health sciences center to achieve our vision
- Engage in community service for the public good
- Grow strong, mutually beneficial partnerships that engage our local, national, and global communities
- Achieve recognition as a leading PA program educating for excellence

Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant Program Graduate Competencies

Upon graduation CHA/PA students are expected to demonstrate competency in the areas identified below. Performance should be commensurate with that of a new practitioner. The CHA/PA program provides educational experiences to support student development of requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes.

PATIENT CARE

Patient care includes patient and setting-specific assessment, evaluation, and management. CHA/PA graduates must demonstrate the ability to provide compassionate, appropriate and effective care for health promotion, and disease prevention that is safe, of high quality and equitable.

CHA/PA graduates are expected to:

- Work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals to provide patient-centered care
- Demonstrate compassionate and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families
- Obtain essential and accurate information about their patients
- Make decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, current scientific evidence, and informed clinical judgment
- Develop and implement patient management plans
- Counsel and educate patients and their families
- Perform medical and surgical procedures essential to their area of practice
- Provide health care services and education aimed at disease prevention and health maintenance
- Use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education

1 Adopted 2012 by ARC-PA, NCCPA, and PAEA Pending adoption by AAPA
MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE

Medical knowledge includes the synthesis of pathophysiology, patient presentation, differential diagnosis, patient management, surgical principles, health promotion, and disease prevention. Physician assistants must demonstrate core knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care in their area of practice. In addition, physician assistants are expected to demonstrate an investigative and analytic thinking approach to clinical situations.

CHA/PA graduates are expected to understand, evaluate, and apply the following to clinical scenarios:

- Evidence-based medicine
- Scientific principles related to patient care
- Etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic process, and epidemiology for medical conditions
- Signs and symptoms of medical and surgical conditions
- Appropriate diagnostic studies
- Management of general medical and surgical conditions to include pharmacologic and other treatment modalities
- Interventions for prevention of disease and health promotion/maintenance
- Screening methods to detect conditions in an asymptomatic individual
- History and physical findings and diagnostic studies to formulate differential diagnoses

PRACTICE-BASED LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

Physician assistants engage in critical analysis of their own practice experience, the medical literature, and other information resources for the purposes of self- and practice-improvement. Physician assistants must be able to assess, evaluate, and improve their patient care practices.

CHA/PA graduates must be able to evaluate their practice in the context of current scientific evidence and are expected to:

- Analyze practice experience and perform practice-based improvement activities using a systematic methodology in concert with other members of the health care delivery team
- Locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies related to their patients’ health
- Apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical literature and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness
- Utilize information technology to manage information, access medical information, and support their own education
- Recognize and appropriately address personal biases, gaps in medical knowledge, and physical limitations in themselves and others
INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Interpersonal and communication skills encompass the verbal, nonverbal, written, and electronic exchange of information. Physician assistants must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, patients’ families, physicians, professional associates, and other individuals within the health care system.

CHA/PA graduates are expected to:
- Create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients
- Use effective communication skills to elicit and provide information
- Adapt communication style and messages to the context of the interaction
- Work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group
- Demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety
- Accurately and adequately document information regarding care for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes

PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is the expression of positive values and ideals as care is delivered. Foremost, it involves prioritizing the interests of those being served above one’s own. Physician assistants must acknowledge their professional and personal limitations. Professionalism also requires practice without impairment from substance abuse, cognitive deficiency or mental illness. Physician assistants must demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to a diverse patient population, and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements.

CHA/PA graduates are expected to demonstrate:
- Understanding of legal and regulatory requirements, as well as the appropriate role of the physician assistant
- Professional relationships with physician supervisors and other health care providers
- Respect, compassion, and integrity
- Accountability to patients, society, and the profession commitment to excellence and ongoing professional development
- Commitment to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and business practices
- Sensitivity and responsiveness to patients’ culture, age, gender, and abilities of self-reflection, critical curiosity, and initiative
- Healthy behaviors and life balance
- Commitment to the education of students and other health care professionals

SYSTEM-BASED PRACTICE

Systems-based practice encompasses the societal, organizational, and economic environments in which health care is delivered. Physician assistants must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger system of health care to provide patient care that balances quality and cost, while maintaining the primacy of the individual
patient. PAs work to improve the health care system of which their practices are a part. CHA/PA graduates are expected to:

- Effectively interact with different types of medical practice and delivery systems
- Understand the funding sources and payment systems that provide coverage for patient care and use the systems effectively
- Practice cost-effective health care and resource allocation that does not compromise quality of care
- Advocate for quality patient care and assist patients in dealing with system complexities
- Partner with supervising physicians, health care managers, and other health care providers to assess, coordinate, and improve the delivery and effectiveness of health care and patient outcomes
- Accept responsibility for promoting a safe environment for patient care and recognizing and correcting systems-based factors that negatively impact patient care
- Apply medical information and clinical data systems to provide effective, efficient patient care
- Recognize and appropriately address system biases that contribute to health care disparities
- Apply the concepts of population health to patient care

Becoming a Professional

When you chose to enter the CHA/PA Program, you also made a conscience decision to become a professional. Professionals are highly educated individuals who practice within an ethical framework – as outlined by an oath or promise. The main components of professional behavior include: honesty/integrity, reliability/responsibility, respect for others, compassion/empathy, self-improvement, self-awareness/knowledge of one’s limits, communication/collaboration skills, and altruism/advocacy. As students within the CHA/PA Program you will have the opportunity to represent the program in many different ways - whether it is within the classroom, within the University, or within the community – each offering ways in which to demonstrate the skills of a professional. The Code of Ethics of the Physician Assistant Profession illustrates more clearly the standards to which students will be held (see the section on the PA profession for more information).

The CHA/PA Program Curriculum

The three-year, innovative curriculum of the University of Colorado PA program is designed to integrate clinical and basic sciences to prepare graduates with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to practice medicine as part of the health care team. Graduates practice in all areas of medicine from Allergy and Asthma to Urology in practices serving all age groups.

The program curriculum on the website at medschool.ucdenver.edu/paprogram is your source of updated curriculum information.
The CHA/PA Program Website – medschool.ucdenver.edu/paprogram

The CHA/PA Program maintains a website with information available regarding curriculum, the student handbook and academic policies, student resources, scholarships and valuable links. Remember to check the website regularly for the most up-to-date information available.
History of the CHA/PA Program

Dr. Henry K. Silver – Our Founder

Henry K. Silver, MD was born in Philadelphia, PA. He attended high school, college and medical school in California. He completed a pediatric internship at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) and a pediatric residency at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. He was an Assistant Professor of pediatrics at UCSF before he moved to Yale University School of Medicine where he rose to the rank of Associate professor. In 1957 he moved to the University of Colorado School of Medicine as Professor and Vice Chair of Pediatrics. He was director of the Child Health Associate (now the Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant) Program from 1968-1991. Dr. Silver was a recognized expert in general pediatrics, pediatric endocrinology and growth. The Silver Syndrome, a syndrome of failure to grow, bears his name. He was one of the early pioneers in the recognition of child abuse and neglect recognizing the implications these syndromes had on normal growth in children. He was the senior editor of the Handbook of Pediatrics and Current Pediatric Diagnosis and Treatment and two other books as well as well over 100 articles in the medical literature. He also served as Associate Dean for Admissions for the MD program where he brought an emphasis on diversity to the selection of students.

Among Dr. Silver’s many awards is the prestigious Institute of Medicine Gustav O. Lienhard Award for outstanding achievement in improving health and services in the United States. In the early and mid 1960s, he recognized that there were many children not receiving medical care and he developed three programs to address this problem. These included the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Program (1965 – with Loretta Ford, RN, PhD), the Child Health Associate Program (1968) and the School Nurse Practitioner program (1970). The University of Colorado PNP
program is generally recognized as the basis for the entire nurse practitioner profession. In a letter dated November 1, 1981 Dr. Stead acknowledged Dr. Silver’s important contributions that led to the establishment of the PA profession. He said “Your statement about the chronology is correct. The demonstration that you could effectively use nurse practitioners was one of the happenings that led to the establishment of the Duke PA Program”.

The CHA/PA Program was the first and remains the only PA program to focus on the health care needs of children. Dr. Silver recognized the need to document the educational, legal and health care ramifications of these new professions. He and his colleagues published multiple articles on these topics as well as documenting the competency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Child Health Associate (PA). Dr. Silver died of cancer at the age of 72 in 1991.

**Student Organizations of the CHA/PA Program**

**Silver Society**

Silver Society is the CHA/PA Program chapter of the Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA). Silver Society provides a way for students to get involved with peers, the PA profession, and the community. These interactions can serve many purposes, such as helping to meet other students in a social atmosphere; working to educate others about the PA profession; improving the community with projects the society implements; or enhancing ones own leadership skills. As you are well aware, the life of a PA student is not easy. Between classes, studying, work and rotations, it is very difficult to remain current on issues affecting PA students and the profession. Student societies can provide a steady ground for students in the program by encouraging them to interact through educational and social programs.

Our student society, named after founder Henry K. Silver, strives to accomplish the above goals and additionally promotes the Physician Assistant profession, community involvement, fundraising, and student social events. Membership in the Silver Society is encouraged of all students and requires small membership dues each year. Multiple officer and committee positions are available to all students. Officers are required to be members of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA).

The Silver Society has been involved in several activities including PA week celebrations, children’s literacy activities, Halloween and Thanksgiving parties for patients at Children’s Hospital Colorado, volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House and Denver Rescue Mission, and many more community service activities. In addition, the Silver Society has effectively participated in promoting the PA profession and diversity through recruitment activities and health promotion presentations at local schools.

In addition to participating in community projects and volunteer activities, the Silver Society is well represented at the American Academy of Physician Assistants Annual Conference. At the conference, the students have the opportunity to compete in the National Student Challenge Bowl, participate in the Assembly of Representatives (the SAAAPA governing body), and participate in the Host City Campaign and philanthropic projects. Students participate in all of the AAPA conference activities and begin to network with their Physician Assistant colleagues.

These are just a few of the highlights of the many projects and exciting opportunities awaiting students as part of the Silver Society. The faculty and staff encourage all students to become active as students in the Physician Assistant profession.
CHA/PA Program Student Association and Executive Council

All students of the program are members of the CHA/PA Program Student Association. This group works closely with Silver Society to ensure representation and interaction of the CHA/PA program students with UC Denver campus and within the community. The Executive Council of the association consists of representative officers who are elected by the individual classes and hold dual office as Silver Society officers. The Executive Council is responsible for representing student interests and fostering communication within the student body and other organizations.
The Physician Assistant Profession

The Physician Assistant Concept

In the early 1960s it became obvious that medicine faced problems due to declining numbers of general practitioners and maldistribution as physicians moved away from rural areas. The physician assistant was first conceptualized by Dr. Charles Hudson. In 1965, Dr. Eugene A. Stead, Jr., instituted a two year education and training program for physician assistants at Duke University.

Physician Assistants (PAs) are health care professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. Within the physician/PA relationship, physician assistants exercise autonomy in medical decision making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services. A PA’s responsibilities may also include education, research, and administrative services.

PAs are educated and trained in intensive education programs accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). The American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Physician Assistants, the American College of Physicians, the American College of Surgeons, the American Medical Association, and the Physician Assistant Education Association all cooperate with the ARC-PA as collaborating organizations to establish, maintain, and promote appropriate standards of quality for entry level education of physician assistants.

PAs are educated in the medical model and work closely with physicians, augmenting and complementing the physician role. Education consists of classroom and laboratory instruction in the basic medical and behavioral sciences (such as anatomy, pharmacology, pathophysiology, clinical medicine, and physical diagnosis), followed by clinical rotations in internal medicine, family medicine, surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine, and geriatric medicine.

Upon graduation, PAs take a national certification examination developed by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) in conjunction with the National Board of Medical Examiners. The Board of Directors of NCCPA includes members at large and representatives from American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Physician Assistants, American College of Emergency Physicians, American College of Physicians, American College of Surgeons, American Hospital Association, American Medical Association, American Osteopathic Association, Association of American Medical Colleges, Physician Assistant Education Association, Federation of State Medical Boards of the U.S., U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Graduation from an accredited physician assistant program and passage of the national certifying exam are required for state licensure.
A number of postgraduate PA programs have also been established to provide practicing PAs with advanced education in medical specialties.

The responsibilities of a physician assistant depend on the practice setting, education and experience of the PA, and on state laws and regulations. Physician assistants can take medical histories, perform physical examinations, order and interpret laboratory tests, diagnose and treat illnesses, perform procedures and counsel patients and families.

**Certification of Physician Assistants**

As the concepts of new health practitioners gained acceptance, state legislatures began to turn their attention to formulating statutes to incorporate these professionals into the framework of the health care delivery system. The development of a nationally standardized mechanism for evaluating PA proficiency became desirable, particularly in those states which mandated that health care providers could practice only after their credentials had been reviewed by the appropriate regulatory agency. With this in mind, and with the cooperation of the American Medical Association, the National Board of Medical Examiners began to develop a national certifying examination for physician assistants in 1972. The original members of the newly formed independent National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) included representatives from:

- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Physician Assistants
- American College of Emergency Physicians
- American College of Physicians
- American College of Surgeons
- American Hospital Association
- American Medical Association
- Association of American Medical Colleges
- Federation of State Medical Boards of the U.S.
- National Medical Association
- Physician Assistant Education Association (formerly APAP)
- U.S. Department of Defense

The NCCPA is charged with assuring the public that physician assistants are competent. This is accomplished through entry level and recertification examinations and acquisition of continuing medical education. Current certification requirements for physician assistants include:

1. Graduating from an accredited physician assistant program
2. Obtaining a passing score on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE)
3. Completing approved continuing medical education and a self assessment or quality improvement project every two years
4. Obtaining a passing score on the Physician Assistant National Recertification-Examination every ten years.

In summary, the PA profession is committed to ensuring the highest quality of health care by following an organized plan of program accreditation, certification of graduate competency and continuing medical education.

**The Physician Assistant Code of Ethics**

The American Academy of Physician Assistants recognizes its responsibility to aid the profession in maintaining high standards in the provision of quality and accessible health care services. The following principles delineate the standards governing the conduct of physician assistants in their professional interactions with patients, colleagues, other health professionals and the general public. Realizing that no code can encompass all ethical responsibilities of the physician assistant, this encumbrance of obligations in the Code of Ethics is not comprehensive and does not constitute a denial of the existence of other obligations, equally imperative, though not specifically mentioned.

**Physician Assistants** shall be committed to providing competent medical care assuming as their responsibility the health, safety, welfare and dignity of all humans.

**Physician Assistants** shall extend to each patient the full measure of their ability as dedicated, empathetic health care providers and shall assume responsibility for skillful and proficient transactions of their professional duties.

**Physician Assistants** shall deliver needed health care services to health consumers without regard to sex, age, race, creed, and socioeconomic and political status.

**Physician Assistants** shall adhere to all state and federal laws governing informed consent concerning the patient’s health care.

**Physician Assistants** shall seek consultation with their supervising physician, other health providers, or qualified professionals having special skills, knowledge or experience whenever the welfare of the patient will be safeguarded or advanced by such consultation. Supervision should include ongoing communication between the physician and physician assistant regarding the care of all patients.

**Physician Assistants** shall take personal responsibility for being familiar with and adhering to all federal/state laws applicable to the practice of their profession.

**Physician Assistants** shall provide only those services for which they are qualified via education and/or experiences and by pertinent legal regulatory process.
Physician Assistants shall not misrepresent in any manner, either directly or indirectly, their skills, training, professional credentials, identity, or services.

Physician Assistants shall uphold the doctrine of confidentiality regarding privileged patient information, unless required to release such information by law or such information becomes necessary to protect the welfare of the patient or the community.

Physician Assistants shall strive to maintain and increase the quality of individual health care service through individual study and continuing education.

Physician Assistants shall have the duty to respect the law, to uphold the dignity of the physician assistant profession and to accept its ethical principles. The physician assistant shall not participate in or conceal any activity that will bring discredit or dishonor to the physician assistant profession and shall expose without fear or favor, any illegal or unethical conduct in the medical profession.

Physician Assistants, ever cognizant of the needs of the community, shall use the knowledge and experience acquired as professionals to contribute to an improved community.

Physician Assistants shall place service before material gain and must carefully guard against conflicts of professional interest.

Physician Assistants shall strive to maintain a spirit of cooperation with their professional organizations and the general public.
The Physician Assistant Profession Oath

Physician Assistant Professional Oath

I pledge to perform the following duties with honesty and dedication:

- I will hold as my primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare and dignity of all human beings.
- I will uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence and justice.
- I will recognize and promote the value of diversity.
- I will treat equally all persons who seek my care.
- I will hold in confidence the information shared in the course of practicing medicine.
- I will assess my personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve my medical practice.
- I will actively seek to expand my knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medicine.
- I will work with other members of the health care team to provide compassionate and effective care of patients.
- I will use my knowledge and experience to contribute to an improved community.
- I will respect my professional relationship with the physician and all other health care professionals.
- I will share and expand knowledge within the profession.

These duties are pledged with sincerity and upon my honor.
Physician Assistant Professional Organizations

American Academy of Physician Assistants

950 N. Washington St.
Alexandria, VA 22314-1552
703/836-2272
http://www.aapa.org/

The American Academy of Physician Assistants is the largest professional organization of physician assistants in the United States of America. It was founded in 1968 and currently has approximately 39,000 members. The AAPA's mission is to promote quality, cost-effective, accessible health care, and to promote the professional and personal development of physician assistants. The Academy is the official organization of the physician assistant profession and is recognized as such by other medical associations and federal, state, and local governments. The Academy maintains liaison relationships with the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, and others.

Some of the activities and services of the AAPA provides are the following:

- Offer continuing medical education for PAs
- Help ensure proper regulations, utilization, and reimbursement of physician assistants
- The only organization representing physician assistants and students in all specialties and employment situations
- Committed to strengthening and promoting the PA profession, physician-PA team, national and international healthcare systems, constituent organizations (state and specialty organizations), and diversity and leadership within the PA profession.
- Provides liaisons with other medical profession organizations (AMA, AAP, ACOG, etc)
- Membership provides a multitude of benefits including discounted conference fees; free journals and prescribing references; professional information including salary profiles, census data, and profession entry information; scholarship opportunities; leadership and networking opportunities; membership benefits for insurance discounts, credit services and travel discounts

The governing body of the AAPA is the House of Delegates. The AAPA House of Delegates meets annually to adopt legislation and policy proposed by 10 standing committees, four councils, the constituent chapters, the Board of Directors, the Student Academy, the Physician Assistant Education Association, the Caucus Congress, and officially recognized specialty organizations. The Academy Board of Directors consists of 13 officials. Other AAPA bodies include the Physician Assistant Foundation, which grants scholarships to deserving PA students; Society for the Preservation of PA History, which records PA history; and a Political Action Committee, which supports federal candidates friendly to the PA profession.

AAPA student membership dues are $75. This is a one time fee that expires four months after graduation.
The Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA) is a unique part of AAPA, as it was established in 1978 with its own bylaws, a Student Board of Directors, and a legislative and policy-making body. SAAAPA’s members consist of the registered student society at each accredited PA program. The students’ voices can be heard through their student society representative to the Student Academy’s Assembly of Representatives (AOR), SAAAPA’s legislative and policy-making body. The AOR meets for two days each year at the AAPA annual conference.

In addition to representing students at the regional and national level, SAAAPA is very involved with the community. Every year, SAAAPA, working with the PA Foundation, reaches out to the community through philanthropic projects to help needy populations and promote physician assistants and physician assistant students in a positive light. Every year, a charity is chosen in the AAPA conference host city for fundraising and volunteer projects. In addition to helping charities, some of the funds raised by students are donated to create a SAAAPA student scholarship each year. Student societies can also apply for grants through the Foundation to help continue their work on the cause of the year. This is a tremendous opportunity to interact with physician assistant students from across the country.

The Student Academy does not have individual members. Student members join AAPA. SAAAPA’s members consist of the members of the registered student society (Silver Society) at each accredited PA program.

Physician Assistant Specialty Organizations and Caucuses

PA Specialty organizations and caucuses consist of PAs, PA residents and students, as well as individuals who share a common interest in individual specialties and interests. Many of these organizations offer student benefits, including scholarships. For more information and membership information for individual specialty organizations, visit the AAPA website at https://members.aapa.org/extra/constituents/special-menu.cfm.

Physician Assistant Education Association

The Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) is the only national organization in the United States representing physician assistant (PA) educational programs. As such, PAEA’s core purpose is to improve the quality of health care for all people by fostering excellence in physician assistant education. Our mission fosters faculty development, advances the body of knowledge
that defines quality education and patient-centered care and promotes diversity in all aspects of physician assistant education.

PAEA represents all accredited PA programs across the United States. The Association also sponsors membership categories for individuals who are not currently employed at member PA programs, but who have an interest in PA education, and for institutions that may be in the process of becoming accredited programs or whose personnel may wish to stay informed about PAEA activities or PA education.

PAEA has developed a number of resources and services in line with its mission that provide opportunities for PA faculty and student development and help members stay abreast of activities within PAEA and the PA educational community. PAEA also created and maintains the Central Application Service for PAs (CASPA), by which prospective applicants complete one secure online application to be sent to the PA programs of their choice. This application service has been available to PA programs and prospective students since 2001.

PAEA, sometimes in conjunction with other PA organizations, supports grant programs for faculty and students, provides resources to its member programs for testing students (ePACKRAT), and publishes aids to PAs who need to recertify (Comprehensive Review for the Certification and Recertification Examinations). Twice each year, PAEA sponsors educational sessions, some of which offer continuing medical education credit for its faculty members, in addition to workshops for special categories of faculty that are presented in various regions throughout the country.

The Association dedicates itself to PA education and educators and is known as the voice for PA education. PAEA advocates for its member programs with the other PA organizations, networks with individuals and groups that are interested in PA education or that are considered to have a stakeholder interest in PAEA, and represents PA education and member programs on issues that range from accreditation to funding from the federal government.

**Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants**

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The Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants (CAPA) is a member organization representing Colorado PAs. CAPA is the AAPA constituent organization that represents Physician Assistants in Colorado. The Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants represents physician assistants in the state, promotes the physician assistant profession within the state, and furthers the education of its members.

The Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants (CAPA) was established in 1976 to promote the PA profession to Colorado's lay and medical community, offer community health education projects, offer continuing medical education for PAs, and to help ensure proper regulation and utilization of PAs in Colorado.
Today, CAPA represents Colorado PAs before the State Legislature and the Board of Medical Examiners, as well as monitoring their decisions and disseminating information. CAPA also provides information to the Colorado Medical Society, local medical societies, and insurance companies.

CAPA's membership includes more than 500 PAs who are widely distributed across the state, working in both primary care and specialty areas. The organization is governed by a Board of Directors which acts on behalf of the membership.

CAPA is a constituent chapter of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), the nationally recognized organization representing the PA profession. The CAPA membership annually elects delegates to serve in the AAPA's House of Delegates and attend the AAPA Annual Convention.

CAPA offers members, including student members, a number of benefits. CAPA holds a summer and winter conference which, in addition to three days of speakers on a variety of health topics, offer a great opportunity to network with working PAs. CAPA dinners occur several times a year at restaurants around the Denver area and are free to all members. There are also leadership opportunities to work with the CAPA Board of Directors and CAPA committees on issues facing Colorado PAs.

Student Membership dues to CAPA are a one-time fee of $65 for students. The membership application is available on their website at www.coloradopas.org.
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