

Physician Assistant Studies and Services

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The physician assistant profession is one of the newest and most exciting in health care. Physician assistants (PAs) are licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision in most states. Some states are granting independent practice status to PAs nationally. They are responsible for making medical decisions and providing a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services.

In the traditional office setting, PAs see patients, obtain histories, perform physical examinations, and order necessary laboratory and/or radiological studies. Based on this information, the PA establishes a diagnosis, develops an appropriate management plan, and initiates treatment that may include prescribing medications. The physician is consulted as needed and remains ultimately responsible for the care provided by the physician/PA team. PAs also are involved in both patient and community health education.

The Department of Physician Assistant Studies and Services is located on the University of Iowa health sciences campus, which includes University of Iowa Health Care, one of the nation's largest university-owned teaching hospitals.