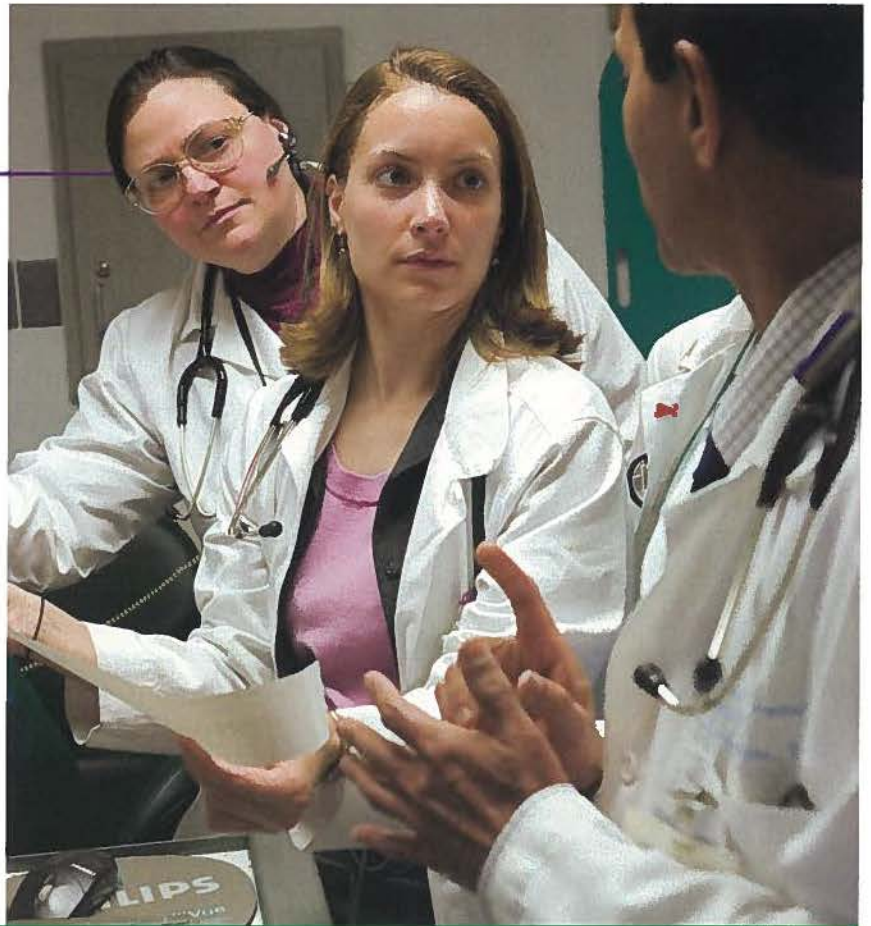


Lead By Example: Be a Preceptor



Ten Reasons to Be a Preceptor

- 1.** Students are a great source of future employees
- 2.** University faculty appointments
- 3.** Students are savvy about new technology
- 4.** Earning Category II CME for recertification
- 5.** The joy of teaching
- 6.** Students bring energy and enthusiasm to your practice
- 7.** Use of university libraries, discounted tuition, free CME
- 8.** PA students can help educate your colleagues and patients about the profession
- 9.** Teaching students keeps you current
- 10.** It feels good to give back to your profession



Many health care workforce experts are predicting a shortage of physicians and other clinicians over the next 20 years.

The physician assistant (PA) profession is well placed to help fill this need, and more than half of PA programs are expanding or considering expanding their enrollments. However, the greatest barrier to expansion identified by PA programs is the shortage of clinical rotation sites in many parts of the country. PAs can do their profession a tremendous service by precepting PA students, just as other PAs and physicians did for them. If you have ever thought about precepting — now is the time to step forward.

Why precept a student?

PA students are typically energetic, highly motivated adult learners. Many preceptors derive great satisfaction from passing on their knowledge and watching students learn and grow. And the teaching can work both ways: Preceptors often find that students bring informed, up-to-date medical knowledge to the site, especially in pharmacology and medical therapeutics. In the age of technology and evidence-based medicine, students can bring to the practice knowledge about PDAs and how to access the latest electronic sources of information. PA students also help to educate other providers and patients about PAs and the PA profession.

One of the greatest benefits of precepting is that it is a wonderful recruiting tool. Taking a student for a four- or six-week rotation is an excellent way to try out a potential new employee. Approximately one-third of PAs found their first jobs through clinical rotations taken during their education. During the clinical rotation, you can test their ability to learn new skills and see whether the student is a good fit for your practice.

How much time will it take out of my day?

Good teaching and supervision do take time. However, PA students can actually add more productive hours to the preceptor's day overall. The student can greet the patient and do the history and physical examination. This allows the preceptor to do something else — administrative tasks, paperwork, make phone calls. PA students do not need to see every patient that the preceptor sees. The PA profession embraces the team approach to the practice of medicine, so PA students can also work with and learn from other clinicians in the practice.

Will it mean more paperwork for me?

Many sites do require documentation related to HIPAA, background checks, immunizations, and the like. However, the PA program facilitates completion of all the required institutional paperwork, develops the affiliation agreement, and schedules the students. How many students you will precept over a given year and the length of the affiliation agreement are negotiated with the PA program. No special certification is required to precept a student. Liability for the student lies with program.

What tangible benefits are there to precepting?

Except in extraordinary circumstances, PA programs do not pay clinical rotation sites to precept PA students. However, programs do offer many other perks to preceptors, including:

- An adjunct faculty appointment (an excellent resume addition)
- Free CME and grand rounds
- Free board review courses
- Faculty development training
- Use of the university library system
- A university ID, which can provide discounts at local stores
- Tickets to athletic or performing arts events
- Discounted tuition for coursework



How can I learn more?

The Physician Assistant Education Association has a booth in the AAPA Exhibit Hall — number 372 — staffed by experienced PA educators who can answer all your questions. You can also sign up to be contacted by the program of your choice, or pick up a list of programs. A list of all accredited PA programs is available on the PAEA Web site at www.paeaonline.org/ProgListing.asp and on the AAPA Web site at www.aapa.org/pgmlist.php3.

For more information about the PA education process and PA educational programs, or to volunteer, contact Toya Vigne at the Physician Assistant Education Association at tvigne@PAEAonline.org; (703) 548-5538, ext. 309.

For more information about the PA profession, including how to hire a PA, contact the American Academy of Physician Assistants at aapa@aapa.org; (703) 836-2272.