



Utilization Of A Physician Assistant: Enhancing Patient Care

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Orthopaedics:
The area of medicine which deals with the health of the bones and muscles.

This field of medicine can be a very male-dominant profession. However, being female certainly does not exclude you from the group. Seaview Orthopaedics, as a practice, is comprised of fourteen male physicians, one female physician, two male physician assistants and four female physician assistants.

When a physician is looking for a way to enhance patient care, a valid option is creating the Physician/Physician Assistant (PA-C) healthcare team. Seaview Orthopaedics has been utilizing physician assistants in their healthcare team for more than eight years.

Physician Assistants are healthcare professionals licensed by the respective state of employment to practice medicine under the supervision of a physician. In lieu of the Physician Assistant, you may see the abbreviation PA-C; this means Physician Assistant-Certified. Each Physician Assistant, upon graduation from an accredited educational program, must be board certified through the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) which works in conjunction with The National Board of Medical Examiners. The Physician Assistant curriculum is a rigorous intense program typically spanning twenty-four to twenty-seven months; all PA programs educate based on the medical model which is designed to complement physician training.

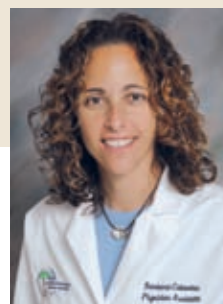
The medical doctor (M.D.)/physician assistant (PA-C) relationship is one of mutual respect and trust which offers the autonomy exercised in medical decision making. This collaboration pro-

vides a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services necessary to share in the responsibility of patient care. In many office and hospital settings, the PA-C can be the first medical provider a patient will come in contact with to better understand what ails the patient. The Physician Assistant is a competent medical provider working within the realm of practice his/her supervising physician has outlined as well as the respective state medical board rules and regulations. Customary practices and functions a Physician Assistant provides include, but are not limited to, conducting physical exams, diagnosing and treating illnesses, ordering and interpreting tests, counseling on preventive health care, assisting in surgery, managing pre-operative and post-operative care and writing prescriptions.

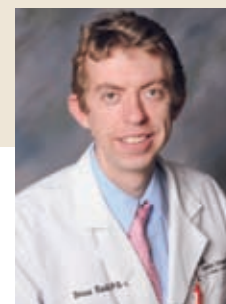
A day in the life of a (Seaview Orthopaedics) physician assistant (PA-C)...

It is 6 am when the alarm goes off (sometimes 5:30 am). Before you even touch the snooze button you are dialing into your voicemail: "You have 10 new messages" comes across the line from that generic, oh so familiar (and sometimes rather irritating) voice. These messages are from our colleagues—ten orthopaedic surgeons and five other Physician Assistants. These messages keep us abreast on our patients in the hospital, our responsibilities for the day, and what types of surgeries are happening for the day and where. Seaview Orthopaedics providers see patients at sev-

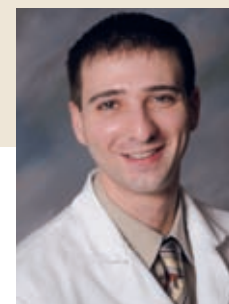
eral facilities in the area including Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Ocean Medical Center, Monmouth Medical Center, Toms River Surgery Center and Shrewsbury Surgery Center as well as the three offices Seaview maintains in Ocean Township, Brick Township and Freehold. Since our providers are spread across Monmouth and Ocean counties, our telephones are our lifelines. Surgeries typically begin at 7:30 am every weekday morning. We prefer to check on our in-hospital patients by 9:00 am and office hours can run from 8:00 am through 4:00 pm. Our availability in some form or another is twenty-four hours a day, everyday. Yet, with all the previously mentioned facilities and all the providers available, each of the Physician Assistants (and physicians, alike) are very content with our positions. We Physician Assistants went to school to practice medicine and gain some autonomy



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in our practice. Working with the physicians at Seaview Orthopaedics allows for this work environment and extends our work relationship by continually teaching us, keeping each PA abreast of emerging orthopaedic medical treatment and techniques.

We look forward to seeing our patients and meeting new patients. If you would like more information on what a Physician Assistant is and how they practice, please visit:
NCCPA.net or AAPA.org.



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