

Physician Assistants are licensed by the Board of Medical Practice and practice under the supervision of a physician. They may perform tasks that would otherwise be done by the supervising physician.

Overview

The number of Minnesota licensed physician assistants (PA) increased from 832 to 1,097 between 2005 and 2006, a 32 percent increase.

Geographic location

Metropolitan – The 21 counties surrounding the seven metropolitan statistical areas connected with Minnesota, as defined by the US Census (Minneapolis-St. Paul; St. Cloud; Rochester; Duluth-Superior, WI; Fargo, ND; Grand Forks, ND; and La Crosse, WI).

Micropolitan – The 20 Minnesota counties surrounding smaller urban centers of at least 10,000 people.

Rural – The 46 Minnesota counties outside a Metropolitan or Micropolitan area.

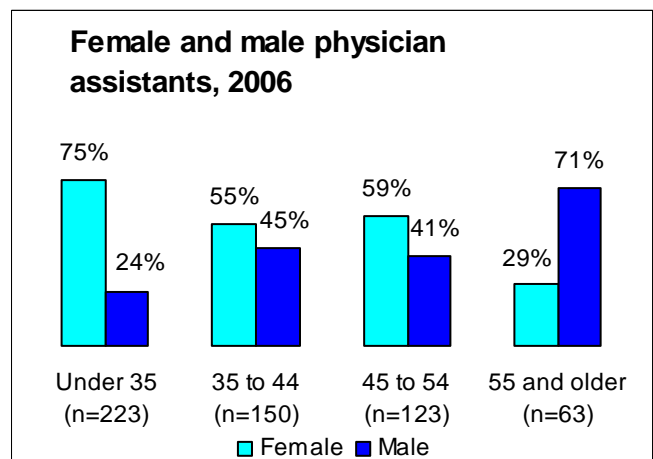
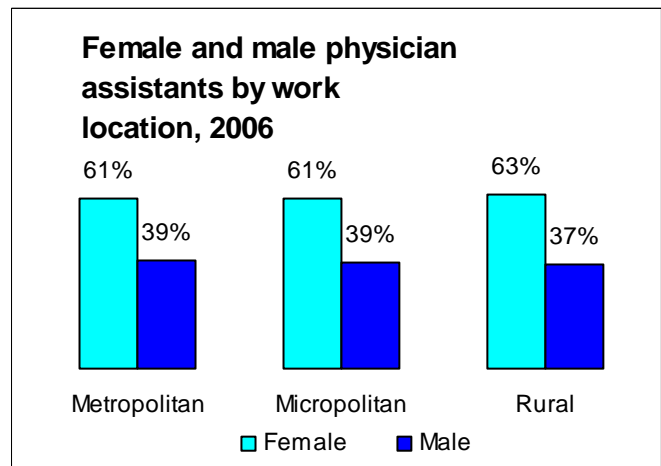
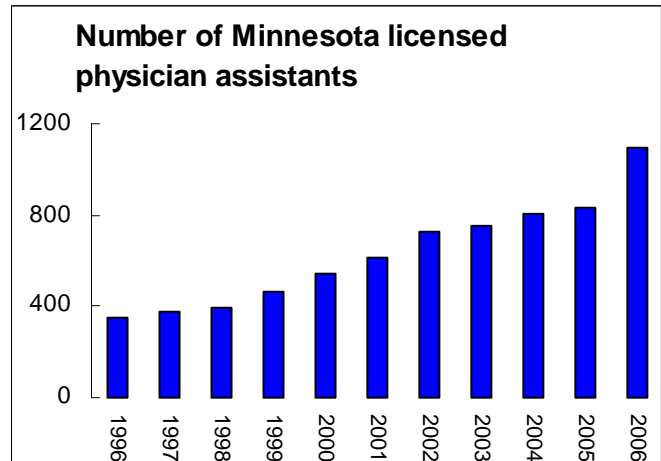
Work location

About 78 percent of Minnesota licensed PAs work in Minnesota. Of those working in Minnesota, 79 percent have a work site in a metropolitan county. Another 12 percent work in micropolitan areas and the remaining 9 percent in rural counties.

PAs are more likely to practice in micropolitan or rural areas than physicians – 21 percent work outside metropolitan areas compared to only 15 percent of physicians.

Demographics

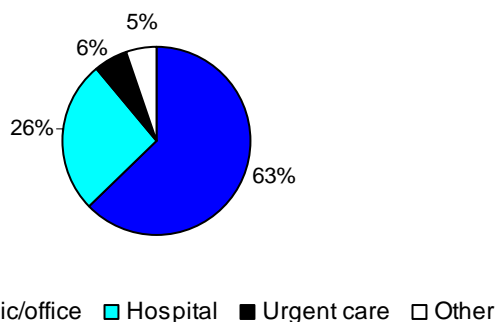
Females account for 61 percent of PAs. PAs ages 55 and older are predominately male but 76 percent of PAs under age 35 are female. Older PAs reflect a unique group, as many may have been the first to be licensed in the state – the first Minnesota licenses were certified in 1988. This may be a factor in explaining age group differences as the profession has been gaining interest and understanding over the years.



Place of employment

Nearly two-thirds of PAs are employed at provider clinics or offices. More than a fourth work in hospitals. The remainder work in urgent care facilities and other work settings.

Primary work site setting of physician assistants, 2006

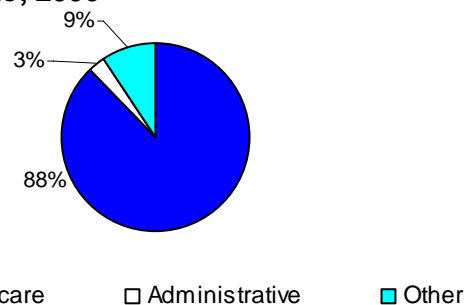


Activities

On an average day, PAs devote 88 percent of their time to patient care. This is based on the average of all PAs, which means some may spend nearly all their time on patient care, while others may spend most of their time on administrative duties.

“Other” work activities include case management, teaching, public health, school health, triage, patient supervision and any additional activities. Each of these activities made up no more than 2 percent of an average work day.

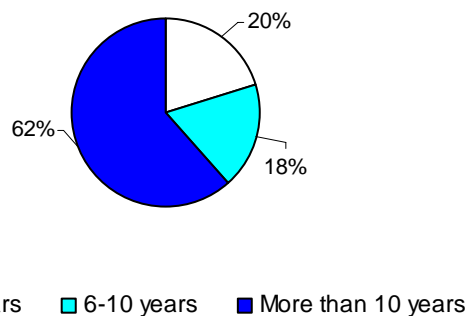
Physician assistant activity as an average percent of time at primary work site, 2006



Future capacity

Thirty-eight percent of PAs plan to practice another 10 years or less. Nearly half of these are under age 35. Younger PAs may anticipate changing careers. It is possible that as the younger PAs age, they will decide to practice longer.

Number of years physician assistants plan to continue practicing, 2006



Data involving place of employment, activities and future capacity are from a 2006 survey of PAs (n=559) and include only those who work in Minnesota. Not all respondents answered all questions analyzed in this report. Additional data reflect all Minnesota licensed PAs.