

Happy 50th birthday to the Physician Assistant profession

This year the physician assistant (PA) profession celebrates 50 years of serving patients in North Carolina and beyond. North Carolina is proud to be the birthplace of the PA. The profession originated in the mid-1960s when a Duke University physician realized his vision of training former medics and hospital corpsman to perform basic medical tasks. The very first class of three PAs graduated from Duke in 1967; Today PAs are the fastest-growing group of medical professionals licensed by NCMB, accounting for nearly one out of every six licenses issued. In recent years the number of PAs in NC has increased by about 7 percent each year, and the total number of PAs licensed by the Board is on pace to reach 7,000 by the end of 2017. NCMB congratulates PAs everywhere on their contributions to patient care!

PAs in North Carolina

LICENSES ISSUED
in 2016



760

POPULATION BY SEX*



4,256

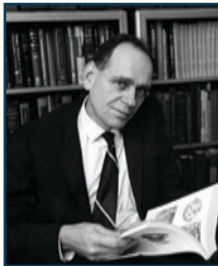


2,291

*As of March 30, 2017

A timeline of significant events in the history of PAs

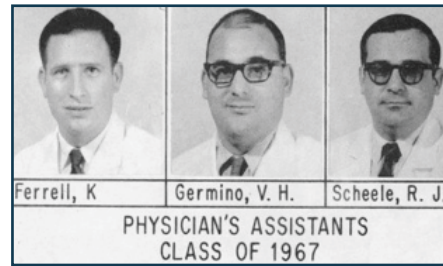
1965



Dr. Eugene A. Stead, Jr. established a 2-year certificate program at Duke University to formally educate former medics and hospital corpsmen as physician assistants (PA). He envisions the role of the PA to be similar to that of Henry "Buddy" Treadwell, informally trained and used by Dr. Amos Johnson in his general practice in rural Garland, NC.

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1967



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The first PAs graduated from Duke University Medical Center (DUMC) establishing the first formal education program in the USA to educate PAs. In 50 years, the profession has grown to include 115,000 clinically active PAs and 225 accredited educational programs.

1970



Joyce Nichols, the first woman to be formally educated as a PA, graduated from Duke University in 1970. Not only was she the first female PA, she was the first African-American woman to become a PA. She practiced in one of the first satellite clinics in rural North Carolina.

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1968



for PAs, was first incorporated in North Carolina.

The American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), the national organization

1968



Prentiss Harrison, PA-C becomes first African-American PA.

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1971



In July, the General Assembly of North Carolina enacted NC Statutes: Section 1. GS 90-18 to allow a physician licensed by the Board of Medical Examiners to supervise a person approved by the Board as one qualified to function as a physician assistant in accordance with rules and regulations promulgated by the Board. The model legislation was developed by lawyers and health policy makers at Duke University and became the standard used by other states during the adoption of similar legislation during the remainder of the century.

1976



The North Carolina Academy of Physician Assistants (NCAPA) was incorporated. NCAPA currently occupies a building in Durham, NC, dedicated to Dr. Eugene Stead, the founder of the PA profession.

1994



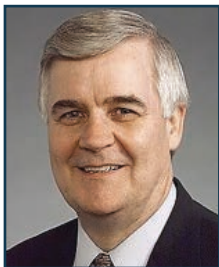
PAs were granted controlled substance prescriptive authority. MDs were given the ability to supervise multiple PAs and PAs were approved to practice without a supervisor on-site. A "physician extender" seat was added to the North Carolina Medical Board, to be filled by a PA or NP.

1986



Medicare Reimbursement for PAs, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, is signed.

1999



A PA, Wayne VonSeggen, was appointed to the North Carolina Medical Board in 1999 and became president of the Board, the first physician assistant to hold such a position in the United States.

2015



HB 724 designated a PA-only seat on the NC Medical Board. Reamer Bushardt, PA Pharm. D, was the first to hold the seat.

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