

PAs work and volunteer abroad to serve people globally, providing essential medical aid and training to countries in times of need.

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Leslie Randolph-Moss, PA-C teaches the Heimlich maneuver during a community health class in Grand Douda, Djibouti, 2014

Courtesy U.S. Air Force photo by SSgt. Leslie Keopka



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The National Library of Medicine produced this exhibition in partnership with the Physician Assistant History Society.

Guest curator: Loren Miller, PhD

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS



After studying medicine in South Korea and immigrating to the United States, Amy Kim enrolled in a PA program to practice urgent care, Marysville, WA, 2014.

Courtesy MEDEX Northwest

www.nlm.nih.gov/pa-collaborationandcare

Physician Assistants, commonly called PAs, practice medicine as part of a team. PAs are nationally certified professionals who evaluate, diagnose, treat, and care for patients, with physician supervision.

Many of the first PA students had served as U.S. Navy Hospital corpsmen in the Vietnam War. As the profession grew, civilians, women, college graduates, and other under-represented groups increasingly entered the field.

Vietnam veteran Charles Phillips worked at a military hospital before becoming one of the first corpsmen to train as a PA, 1970

Courtesy MEDEX Northwest



Today, PAs specialize in many areas, including internal medicine, surgery, and obstetrics and gynecology. They are also able to change fields throughout their careers due to their generalist educations, clinical training, and certifications.

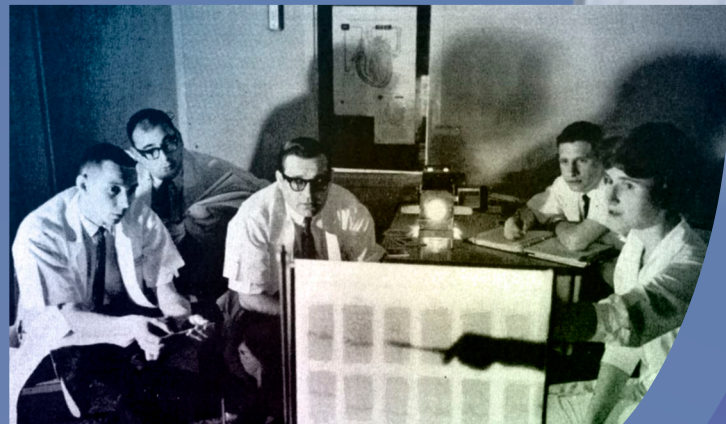
PA-C Katja Von Sitas specializes in obstetrics and gynecology at Northwestern Medical Center in St. Albans, VT, 2012

Courtesy Northwestern Medical Center in St. Albans, VT



PA-C Jill Roncarati (left) from Boston Health Care for the Homeless consults with patients to help them find housing, Boston, MA, 2014

Courtesy Joshua Touster Photography ©2016



American physician Eugene Stead opened the first academic PA program at Duke University in 1965. He made collaboration a foundation of the profession.

Nurse Kaye Andreoli (right) teaches the first PA students at Duke University to interpret an electrocardiograph recording, Durham, NC, 1966

Courtesy Physician Assistant History Society

Many PAs work to help meet people's basic human needs, like food, shelter, education, and emotional support. Some PAs work for systematic change in health through activism and political reforms.