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PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT AND ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE (APRN) NEWS AND INFORMATION



AN ANNUAL OCTOBER CELEBRATION!

NATIONAL PA WEEK IS HERE

Every October 6-12th, the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) celebrates National PA Week, which recognizes the PA profession and its contributions to the nation's health. PA Day (October 8th) kicks off PA Week by celebrating PAs and the amazing work they do. PAs practice and prescribe medication on healthcare teams with physicians and other providers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the uniformed services. Today there are more than 115,500 PAs in the U.S. Before it was a weeklong event, National PA Day was first celebrated on October 6, 1987, in honor of the 20th anniversary of the first graduating class of PAs from the Duke University PA program. October 6 is also the birthday of the profession's founder, Eugene A. Stead, Jr., MD. In recent years, several hundred PAs and PA students have gathered on The Today Show plaza for "PAs on the Plaza" on PA Day. They wear your white coats, wave posters and show enthusiasm for the PA profession.

Is the Night Shift the Right Shift for You?

As a nurse practitioner or physician assistant, there are an endless number of scheduling possibilities that allow you to create the lifestyle that best fits your needs. Of course, you may be able to choose the traditional five-day a week, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule. But for others in health care, an unconventional schedule is best — if you're looking to save on childcare, for example, working weekends and leaving your spouse in charge of the kids may be best for you.

At some point in your career you will be faced with the choice of working these unusual schedules. One of those schedules is choosing to work at night. While there are pros and cons to this shift, be aware that health researchers have found definite negative effects of night shifts on the health of employees.

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YOUR CAREER

THE NIGHT SHIFT

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Working the night shift as a nurse practitioner or physician assistant has serious disadvantages, including interfering with the circadian rhythms of the body, which are based on sleeping at night and remaining awake during the day. Most people have to adjust their lifestyles to be able to stay alert during the night while being able to sleep comfortably during the day. The National Sleep Foundation says that according to the International Classifications of Sleep Disorders, those who work in shifts are at a greater risk for several serious conditions, such as diabetes, ulcers, cardiovascular disease and depression.

“The problem is when I try to squeeze normal day person things into that AM sleep time,” says one physician assistant. “I had to do this after my last string of nights and I felt very unwell. Had some mild visual hallucinations, gaps in memory, even some speech disturbances. So I really try not to do that.”

Another disadvantage of working overnight that is not as obvious: social life. According to several studies, nurse practitioners and physi-



cian assistants who work at night report that their work shift influences the quality of their interaction with their family and friends. Night shift workers who suffer from sleep and health disturbances find it difficult to fulfill their family responsibilities and also spend lesser time with their children and spouses. Working the night shift also reduces social interactions and may lead to an unhealthy sense of isolation.

“It can be difficult to find time to spend with my friends and family,” says one nurse practitioner who works at night. “I’m alone a lot of during the day. It’s nice sometimes but gets old after awhile.”

“Most of my friends are other NPs who work the same shift,” says another. “Try dating when you’re working at night and everyone else works days.”

So knowing all the pitfalls, are there any advantages of working overnight? Yes, two very important ones.

1. Convenience. Working a day shift means you put off certain personal tasks to the late evening hours or the weekend. If you work the night shift though, you get to complete your tasks like grocery shopping, for example, during off-peak hours and save time. Moreover, when you work the night shift, it’s easier for you to attend a meeting at your child’s school or a visit to your bank.

2. Financial. Often nurse practitioners and physician assistants get paid more working the night shift as compared to the day shift. If you have the ability to sleep during the day, then you don’t need to spend money on a baby sitter for your children when they get home from school. Assuming your spouse works the day shift, you can manage the kids without outside help, which reduces your expenses, making the night shift even more financially beneficial.

In order to benefit from these two advantages, you have to stay healthy. Here are some of tips.

1. Sleep. A common problem with working night shift is the risk of developing a sleep disorder. Sleeping during the day can often lead to a disrupted rest — not only

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because your body isn't naturally programmed to sleep then but also because of daytime distractions. Try and recreate a night-time atmosphere. Make sure your room is as dark as possible, turn your phone off. Use an eye mask and earplugs if it tends to get noisy where you usually rest.

2. Exercise. Exercising regularly helps your overall health. Get into a regular routine and stick to it. If you tend to feel exhausted after finishing your night shift, schedule your workouts in before your shift. Sticking to a set amount of workouts will help your energy levels, sleep habits and mental health. On days where you're not able workout in, remain active. Instead of sitting down for long periods of time, try standing. Take the stairs at work and walk up and down them a few times during your shift. Include squats or stretches when you have a chance. Minor things can make a difference and help you sleep better.



3. Eat healthy. If you are tired, you may be more likely to reach for unhealthy options because it feels easier. Make sure you have healthy foods readily available, both at home and at work. Preparing all of your healthy meals before working night shift is the key to staying healthy. Meal prepping can be a cost-effective and easy way to make sure that you have all the meals ready that you need. The last thing you want to be doing is cooking when you are tired and hungry after working night shift so try to cook as much as you can beforehand. Don't go to the vending machine at work. Bring your own food to work! Snacking on something healthy every few hours can help keep your metabolism going and help you feel full without overdoing it.

4. Stick to a eating schedule. Studies show your digestion slows down during the night so, if possible, try to maintain normal eating hours on the days that you're working night shift. Eating too much during night hours can contribute to weight gain and poor sleep. Don't use your night shift as a time to eat massive meals. Try eating breakfast as soon as you get home, lunch when you wake up and dinner before you start work. Pack healthy snacks (with some protein in them) to take with you so you have energy for your night shift.

5. Cut down the caffeine. Too much coffee and energy drinks, especially throughout the night, are not great for your health. Energy drinks are often filled with sugar. Replace them with natural energy-rich foods, such as an apple. If you drink coffee, try to limit it to one per shift. Also, drink it four to five hours before your shift is due to end, as caffeine stays in your system for a long time and you may find it hard to sleep when you get home.

6. Monitor your health. Just because you are a medical professional, doesn't mean that you are an expert on your own health. Visit you doctor regularly.





Under 35? Then You Probably Aren't Saving

If you are under 35, you are probably not saving a dime. According to a study by Moody's Analytics, not only this age group not saving, their savings rate has dipped to negative 2%, meaning that they're spending more than they have. This is the only age group that has a negative savings rate.

In contrast, workers between the ages of 35 and 44 have a positive savings rate of about 3%.

Millennials are struggling in spite of an improving job market, with an unemployment rate that dipped 3.9% in October overall and even lower for physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

Even with a low unemployment rate, millennials health care professionals often have a tough time making ends meet. Many have taken on hefty student debt to attain the skills they need to be competitive in health care.

"The millennials are waiting for those above them to either retire



or die," says Babson College finance professor Dr. John Edmunds. "But the baby boomers are not going to give it up that easily."

So what is the best financial advice for nurse practitioners and physician assistants in the current economy? Here is some advice.

1. It is NEVER too early to save. Start saving and investing your hard earned dollars. "The financial side of being a physician assistant is rarely covered during PA school, which is unfortunate," says Savanna Perry, a PA from Martinez, Georgia. "We're fortunate to have great salaries, but we must plan for our own retirement."

While many new to the profession have student debt, it is still possible to save. The key is to set aside some

funds for saving instead of splurging. "When I graduated from PA school," says Perry, "I would spend my money on anything my heart desired, and then use whatever was left for student loans or savings. Not my most brilliant plan."

After a few months, she realized she was making a huge mistake and adjusted her priorities. She been investing regularly even since.

2. But still get rid of debt. In order to pay off your student loans AND save for retirement at the same time, you MUST avoid credit card debt. If you do get into debt, pay off the smallest debts first and working your way up to the larger debts so the momentum

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YOUR FINANCES

TIME TO SAVE

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encourages you to reach your goals. “Luckily, I avoided credit card debt,” says Perry, “but that is a common problem for many students coming out of PA school and even practicing PAs.”

3. Know your worth. In order to have money you’ll need in retirement, you have to make as much money as possible during your working year. Part of your strategy comes down to ensuring that you’re getting the money you deserve. Be strong in negotiations and asking for what you want. If you think you’re entitled to a raise because, then you need to ask for it. And even better if you can have raises built into your contract.

If you are not satisfied in how much you are being paid, it may be time to look for another job. “Even if you love your position,” Perry says, “know the demand for your area and how other PAs are being compensated.”

4. Learn as much as you can about saving and investing. Find a mentor or advisor. That’s what Perry did. “I constantly try to get advice from family members who are dentists and physicians to see what they’ve learned about managing their finances.”



LATEST NEWS AND HEADLINES

- ▶ The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the use of a human papillomavirus vaccine called Gardasil 9 for men and women between the ages of 27 and 45. The FDA previously approved the HPV vaccine for people age 9 to 26.
- ▶ Australia is set to be the first country to eliminate cervical cancer, aided by its national vaccination and screening programs, says a new study.
- ▶ The U.S. Food and Drug Administration revoked the use of seven food additives after environmentalists and food safety experts presented data showing six of the synthetic flavoring substances and flavor enhancers caused cancer in laboratory animals.
- ▶ Eating processed meats like bacon, sausages and ham could increase the risk of breast cancer by 9 percent, a study of 1.2 million women has said.
- ▶ The U.S. government estimates that 80,000 Americans died of flu and its complications last winter – the disease’s highest death toll in at least four decades.

N.Y. Times	<u>2018 Nobel Prize in medicine awarded to 2 cancer immunotherapy researchers</u>
Forbes	<u>States ease more restrictions to physician assistants as team care takes hold</u>
Reuters	<u>Light exercise might lessen severity of a future stroke</u>
CNN	<u>Combined birth control may reduce ovarian cancer risk</u>
Nurse.org	<u>U.S. hospitals facing shortage of pain medication</u>





JOB INTERVIEW

PHONE SCREEN – EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS

By William Rubinow, Lyle Health

On the phone with a practice manager, recruiter, HR representative or Physician? Be sure to utilize the time you have and conduct a two-way value added phone call.

1. Be an excellent listener. Ask questions based on what they say. This shows you are listening to what they are saying, digesting the information, analyzing it, understanding what they say and then quickly turning it around by asking intelligent questions based on what they say. This shows your questions are not staged, planned and illustrate to the employer you are smart, quick and an effective listener.

2. Be sure to ask about the expectations and responsibilities associated with the position.

Candidate expectations not matching the actual job description is the number one reason for candidate turnover in less than a year of accepting a permanent position.

3. What are some of the successful traits and characteristics the employer sees in successful Physician Assistant hires in the past?

4. How long has the position been open? Why is the position open?

5. What type of existing support staff does the employer have in place? How many Physician Assistants do they have on staff? Would the position be supporting one physician or a team of physicians? How team oriented is their current office environment?

YOUR CAREER

LOCATION PREFERENCE - EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

By William Rubinow, Lyle Health

Choosing where to work is typically an easy decision; most Physician Assistants select locations they are either from or have family close by or where they received their Masters or Undergraduate degrees. When choosing a location, employers can sometimes be hesitant. As they don't want to invest training time and don't want to go through the hiring process just to see a PA leave 6-12 months later. San Diego is a great place to live, but without a compelling reason to live and work there (family, went to school there, friends in the area, significant other has taken a job there, etc.) be prepared to defend your move and prepare a lucid and rational defense to what appears to be a transient move.

BY THE NUMBERS

134,141

Total number of physician assistants in the United States as of October 2018. New York leads the nation with 13,557. California is second with 11,079. Texas has 9,158 physician assistants and Florida reports 8,408. Women make up 68.2% of all certified PAs. Men make up 31.8%. The median age of certified physician assistants is 38.