

## CERTIFIED PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

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### I. ISSUE

Certified Physician Assistant.

### II. POLICY

A. A physician assistant (PA) may provide covered services under general supervision of a physician. The physician assistant must meet the applicable state requirements governing the qualifications for physician assistants and at least one of the following conditions:

1. Is currently certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants to assist primary care physicians, or
2. Has satisfactorily completed a program for preparing physician assistants that:
  - a. Was at least 1 academic year in length;
  - b. Consisted of supervised clinical practice and at least 4 months (in the aggregate) of classroom instruction directed toward preparing students to deliver health care; and
  - c. Was accredited by the American Medical Association's Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation; or
3. Has satisfactorily completed a formal educational program for preparing physician assistants that does not meet the requirements of [paragraph II.A.2.](#) and had been assisting primary care physicians for a minimum of 12 months during the 18-month period immediately preceding January 1, 1987.
4. If state licensure is available, it is required even if the state offers licensure on a voluntary basis.

B. Physician Supervision. Physician supervision may be remote and does not require direct contact between the physician and physician assistant at the time the care is rendered.

**TRICARE POLICY MANUAL 6010.54-M, AUGUST 1, 2002**

CHAPTER 11, SECTION 3.12

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The employing physician must be immediately available to the PA for consultation purposes by telephone. Evidence of referral by the physician is not required.

C. Prescriptions may be written by authorized PAs if practicing within the scope of their license, certification or other legal authorization.

D. PA services covered are those within the scope of the PA's practice as provided by state law and [32 CFR 199.6](#) that are defined as authorized benefits when rendered by physicians. The employing physician must be an authorized provider (e.g., a physician under sanction by TRICARE/CHAMPUS also results in his or her physician assistant being placed in unauthorized TRICARE/CHAMPUS provider status).

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