



# Northeastern University

## Bouvé College of Health Sciences

### Northeastern University Physician Assistant Program

#### Specific Expected Learning Outcomes

**Medical Knowledge:** Medical knowledge includes the synthesis of pathophysiology, patient presentation, differential diagnosis, patient management, surgical principles, health promotion, and disease prevention. Physician assistant students must demonstrate core knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care in their area of practice. In addition, physician assistant students are expected to demonstrate an investigative and analytic thinking approach to clinical situations. Physician assistant students are expected to develop the requisite medical knowledge proficiencies during their graduate education to understand, evaluate, and apply the following to clinical scenarios:

- evidence-based medicine
- scientific principles related to patient care
- etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic process, and epidemiology for medical conditions
- signs and symptoms of medical and surgical conditions
- appropriate diagnostic studies
- management of general medical and surgical conditions to include pharmacologic and other treatment modalities
- interventions for prevention of disease and health promotion/maintenance
- screening methods to detect conditions in an asymptomatic individual
- history and physical findings and diagnostic studies to formulate differential diagnoses upon completion of the program.

**Interpersonal & Communication Skills:** Interpersonal and communication skills encompass the verbal, nonverbal, written, and electronic exchange of information. Physician assistant students must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, patients' families, physicians, professional associates, and other individuals within the health care system. Physician assistant students are expected to develop the requisite interpersonal and communication skills proficiencies during the course of their graduate education to:

- create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients
- use effective communication skills to elicit and provide information
- adapt communication style and messages to the context of the interaction
- work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group
- demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety
- accurately and adequately document information regarding care for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes upon completion of the program.

**Patient Care:** Patient care includes patient- and setting-specific assessment, evaluation, and management. Physician assistant students must demonstrate care that is effective, safe, high quality, and equitable. Physician assistant students are expected to develop the requisite patient care proficiencies during their graduate education to:

- work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals to provide patient-centered care
- demonstrate compassionate and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families
- obtain essential and accurate information about their patients
- make decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, current scientific evidence, and informed clinical judgment
- develop and implement patient management plans
- counsel and educate patients and their families
- perform medical and surgical procedures essential to their area of practice
- provide health care services and education aimed at disease prevention and health maintenance
- use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education upon completion of the program.

**Professionalism:** Professionalism is the expression of positive values and ideals as care is delivered. Foremost, it involves prioritizing the interests of those being served above one's own. Physician assistant students must acknowledge their professional and personal limitations. Professionalism also requires that PA students practice without impairment from substance abuse, cognitive deficiency or mental illness. Physician assistant students must demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to a diverse patient population, and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements. Physician assistant students are expected to develop the requisite professionalism skill proficiencies during the course of their graduate education to demonstrate:

- understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements, as well as the appropriate role of the physician assistant
- professional relationships with physician supervisors and other health care providers
- respect, compassion, and integrity
- accountability to patients, society, and the profession
- commitment to excellence and on-going professional development
- commitment to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and business practices
- sensitivity and responsiveness to patients' culture, age, gender, and abilities
- self-reflection, critical curiosity, and initiative
- healthy behaviors and life balance
- commitment to the education of students and other health care professionals upon completion of the program.

**Practice-based Learning & Improvement:** Practice-based learning and improvement includes the processes through which physician assistant students engage in critical analysis of their own practice experience, the medical literature, and other information resources for the purposes of self- and practice-improvement. Physician assistant students must be able to assess, evaluate, and improve their patient care practices. Physician assistant students are expected to develop the requisite practice-based learning and improvement skill proficiencies during their graduate education to:

- analyze practice experience and perform practice-based improvement activities using a systematic methodology in concert with other members of the health care delivery team
- locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies related to their patients' health
- apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical literature and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness
- utilize information technology to manage information, access medical information, and support their own education
- recognize and appropriately address personal biases, gaps in medical knowledge, and physical limitations in themselves and others upon completion of the program.

**Systems-based Practice:** Systems-based practice encompasses the societal, organizational, and economic environments in which health care is delivered. Physician assistant students must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger system of health care to provide patient care that balances quality and cost, while maintaining the primacy of the individual patient. PA students should work to improve the health care system of which their practices are a part. Physician assistant students are expected to develop the requisite systems-based practice skill proficiencies during the course of their graduate education to:

- effectively interact with different types of medical practice and delivery systems
- understand the funding sources and payment systems that provide coverage for patient care and use the systems effectively
- practice cost-effective health care and resource allocation that does not compromise quality of care
- advocate for quality patient care and assist patients in dealing with system complexities
- partner with supervising physicians, health care managers, and other health care providers to assess, coordinate, and improve the delivery and effectiveness of health care and patient outcomes
- accept responsibility for promoting a safe environment for patient care and recognizing and correcting systems-based factors that negatively impact patient care
- apply medical information and clinical data systems to provide effective, efficient patient care
- recognize and appropriately address system biases that contribute to health care disparities
- apply the concepts of population health to patient care upon completion of the program.