

Student Learning Outcomes

Today's society demands higher quality and greater accountability in health care. Like other health care professions, the PA profession responded to this demand by establishing physician assistant competencies that all practicing physician assistants must exhibit and physician assistant training programs should reference when preparing their graduates for entry into the profession. The Physician Assistant Education Association, along with several other professional agencies authored *Competencies for Physician Assistant* as a guideline evaluating competency of physician assistant practitioners. The RCRMC/RCC Physician Assistant Program has adopted some of these competencies (with modifications), as student learning outcomes (SLOs) for the overall program. Therefore, the SLOs in this document are not student learning outcomes for courses in the program, but SLOs for the program which reflect those competencies of physician assistant graduates.

The program student learning outcomes are subdivided into six categories: medical knowledge, interpersonal & communications skills, patient care, professionalism, practice-base learning and improvement, and systems-based practice. Each of the categories have been linked with the institutional General Education SLOs. (GESLOs).

Medical Knowledge (GESLO: Critical Thinking, Application of Knowledge, Breadth of Knowledge)

Upon completion of the physician assistant program students should be able to:

- analyze etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic process, and epidemiology for medical conditions
- identify and evaluate signs and symptoms of medical conditions
- select and analyze appropriate diagnostic or lab studies
- manage general medical and surgical conditions integrating knowledge about the indications, contraindications, side effects, interactions and adverse reactions of pharmacologic agents and other relevant treatment modalities
- determine the appropriate health care setting for medical and surgical conditions, including appropriate consultations, referrals or admission
- discuss concepts of health promotion and disease prevention as recommended in the *Healthy People 2010* guidelines
- utilize appropriate screening methods of disease processes in asymptomatic individuals
- differentiate between the normal and abnormal anatomic, physiological, laboratory findings, and other diagnostic data
- analyze and synthesize history, physical findings, and diagnostic studies to formulate a differential diagnosis
- provide competent health care to patients with chronic conditions

Patient Care (GESLO: Critical Thinking, Breadth of Knowledge, Application of Knowledge)

Patient care requires age-appropriate assessment, evaluation and management. Physician assistant graduates must demonstrate competent, patient-centered, efficient and equitable health care treatment including health promotion disease prevention.

Upon completion of the physician assistant program students should be able to:

- collaborate effectively with physicians and other interdisciplinary teams to provide patient-centered care
- demonstrate caring and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families
- ascertain essential and accurate information about their patients

- develop informed decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, up-to-date scientific evidence, and clinical judgment
- develop and carry out patient management plan
- counsel and educate patients and their families on health care
- perform competent medical and surgical procedures considered essential in the area of practice

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (GESLO: Global Awareness, Communication Skills)

Interpersonal and communication skills include verbal, nonverbal and exchange of written information. Physician assistant graduates must demonstrate interpersonal skill when communicating with their patients, the patient's family, physicians and other interdisciplinary team members.

Upon completion of the physician assistant program students should be able to:

- create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationships with patients
- utilize effective listening, nonverbal, verbal and writing skills to elicit and provide information
- modify communication style as needed for individual patient interaction
- collaborate effectively with physicians, other disciplinary team members, and professional groups
- employ human behavior concepts to effectively manage the patient's care
- demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety
- demonstrate competent documentation concerning the patient care process for medical, legal, quality assurance and financial purposes

Professionalism (GESLO: Critical Thinking, Breadth of Knowledge, Application of Knowledge, Global Awareness, Communication Skills)

Professionalism in medicine is the expression of ethical values showing respect, compassion, empathy, trust, integrity and ideals as patient care is delivered. Foremost, it requires prioritizing the patient's interest above one's own values. Physician assistants must know their own personal and professional limitations. Physician assistants must practice without impairment from substance abuse or mental illness.

Upon completion of the physician assistant program students should be able to:

- integrate the legal and regulatory guidelines into the professional role of the physician assistant
- demonstrate professional relationships with physician supervisors and other interdisciplinary team members
- demonstrate respect, compassion and integrity for the patient, society, and the PA profession
- show commitment to on-going professional development
- demonstrate knowledge of ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and business practices
- show sensitivity and responsiveness to patients' culture, age, gender and disabilities.

Evidence-Based Learning (GESLO: Critical Thinking, Information Skills, Breadth of Knowledge, Global Awareness)

Evidence-based learning includes the processes through which clinicians engage in critical analysis of their own practice experience, medical literature and other information sources for the purpose of self-improvement. Physician assistants must be able to assess, evaluate and improve their patient care practice using evidence-based medicine.

Upon completion of the physician assistant program students should be able to:

- analyze practice experiences and perform evidence-based learning activities using a systematic methodology in concert with other members of the interdisciplinary team
- establish, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies related to the patients' health problem
- ascertain and apply information about their own population of patients and the larger population from which their patients are drawn
- apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical studies and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness
- apply information technology to manage information, access on-line medical information, and support their own education
- distinguish biases related to gender, culture, cognitive, emotional, and physical limitations in themselves and others

Systems-Based Practice (GESLO: Information Skills, Critical Thinking)

System-based practice encompasses the societal, organizational and economic environments in which health care is delivered. Physician assistant graduates should be able to:

Upon completion of the physician assistant program students should be able to:

- utilize information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education
- demonstrate knowledge of funding sources and payment systems that provide coverage for patient care
- demonstrate cost-effective health care and resource allocation that does not compromise quality of care
- utilize medical information and clinical data systems to provide efficient patient care.