

# PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

FACILITATING A PROVIDER PIPELINE  
TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES



## At a glance

A.T. Still University-Arizona School of Health Sciences' (ATSU-ASHS) community health center (CHC) partners

- 12 CHC partners (as of October 2024)
  - » Three to eight students per CHC
- Capstone project: **Community Health Improvement (CHI)** or **Quality Improvement in Healthcare (QIH)** drives student engagement in the community

## Hometown Scholars program

- CHC partners identify members of the community to attend physician assistant (PA) school.
- Students return to endorsing CHC for clinical-year education.

## Rural and primary care focused

ATSU-ASHS' PA program has been awarded three grants from the Health Resources and Services Administration.

- Scholarships for Health Professions Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds
- Primary Care Training and Enhancement (PCTE)
- PCTE Rural Health Training

## Excellent didactic preparation and clinical skills

PA students gain 14 months of didactic education prior to clinical rotations.

- Systems based
- Social determinants of health
- Communication drills
- Extensive clinical procedural skills education using advanced technologies and simulation

For more information, please contact

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## What is the role of a regional director of medical education (RDME)?

Each CHC partner selects an RDME to oversee students' clinical-year experiences, provide guidance, and coordinate logistical support necessary to ensure student success in meeting the requirements of the clinical-year curriculum, including mentoring and support of the student-led master's capstone project.

### RDME qualifications:

- A prescribing clinician (preferably a PA, if available)
- Knowledgeable about organizational operations and personnel
- Able to develop and maintain relationships in the community to facilitate student experiences (e.g., hospital-based Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences or SCPEs)
- Able to provide administrative support and time necessary to fulfill the position's duties (average 10 hours weekly of protected time for the RDME and/or the RDME's administrative support staff)

### RDME duties

Department faculty and staff provide mentoring and support for all required activities:

- Participate in student cohort selection via Zoom introductions, Q&A sessions, etc. (January-February)
- Orchestrate an orientation for the PA students to the campus and community (September)
- Oversee and facilitate proctoring of required assessments (written, practical, and verbal)
- Recruit and screen preceptors
- Develop and coordinate each student's SCPE (rotation) schedule for the year (June)
- Ensure student credentialing is completed for hospital rotations in the community
- Ensure preceptor obligations and deadlines are met, including credential paperwork, preceptor training, response to student check-in, and student performance evaluations

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