

What Is the Purpose of the Program?

The Opioid Response Network-2 Clinical Sites Initiative (ORN-2) is aimed at expanding the physician assistant (PA) workforce in systems caring for patients with opioid use disorders (OUDs). PAEA is collaborating with substance use disorder (SUD) treatment provider organizations to connect OUD-focused clinical sites with PA education programs. Our collaboration will bolster the behavioral health workforce with qualified, well-trained, early-career practitioners.

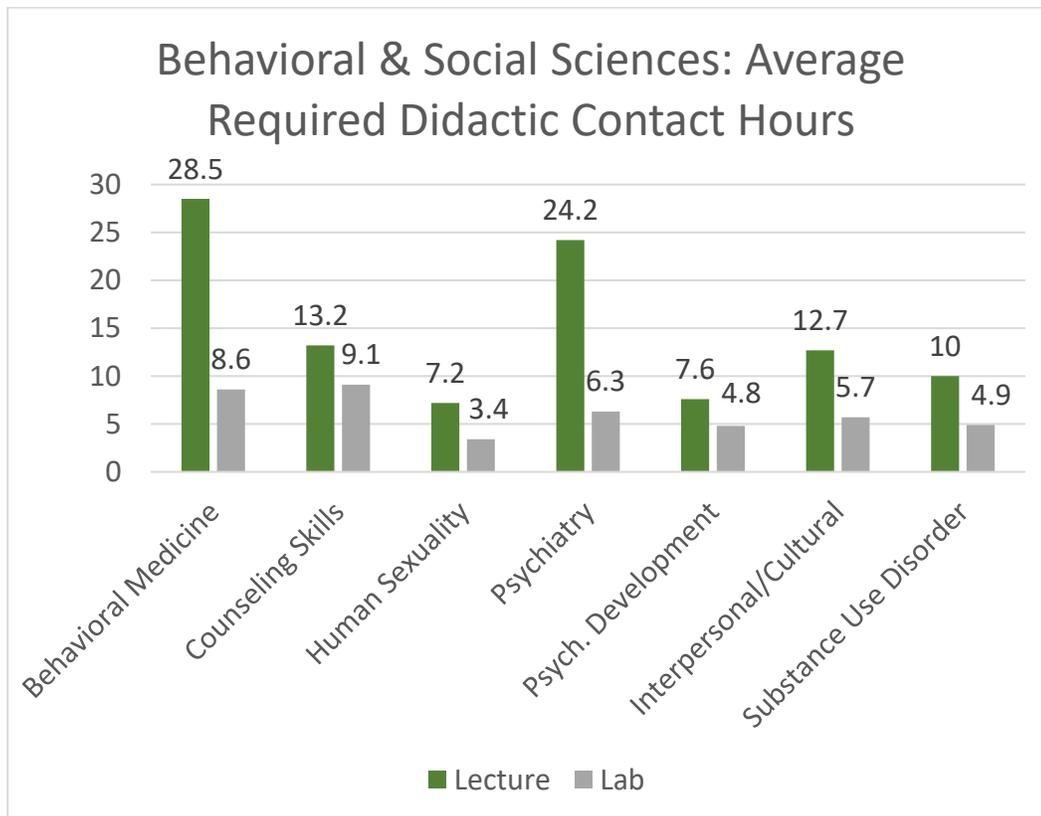


Opioid Response Network

PA students joining clinical sites for their rotations will be ready to apply their broad medical and behavioral health training to provide team-based psychiatric care, MAT, and primary care. With expanded OUD-treatment training and experience, these graduates will improve access to care for behavioral health practices and increase the availability of providers, helping

to address health disparities related to OUD.

How Does PA Education Prepare Students for Clinical Practice?



Fast Facts

How PAs are helping to address the opioid epidemic:

- Of certified PAs in psychiatry, 92% prescribe medications for acute/chronic illness.²
- 86.1% of all PAs in psychiatry counsel patients and families.²

Psychiatry and addiction medicine are growth fields for PA involvement:

- Currently 0.4% of certified PAs practice addiction medicine.²
- Currently 1.6% of certified PAs practice psychiatry.²
- The percentage of certified PAs practicing in pain management has increased 152% since 2016.²

Source: Physician Assistant Education Association, By the Numbers: Curriculum Report 5: Data from the 2019 Didactic Curriculum Survey. Washington, DC: PAEA; 2020. doi: 10.17538/CR5.2020.



PA students train for an average of 27 continuous months in two phases. During the didactic (classroom) phase, students learn anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, physical diagnosis, clinical medicine, behavioral medicine, procedures, population health, and medical ethics.¹ During the clinical phase, students complete 2,000 hours of full-time, supervised clinical experiences during 4- to 8-week rotations in psychiatry, family medicine, internal medicine, surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, and emergency medicine.

To practice medicine as a PA, graduates must pass a national PA certification exam administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants and obtain a state license or registration.¹ PAs are eligible for DEA licenses and x-waivers to prescribe buprenorphine.

How SUD Treatment Providers Can Participate in the Program

By participating in the program, behavioral health clinical sites will be connected with PA programs seeking to set up full-time, supervised, 4- to 8-week rotations for their students.

As they advance in their careers, PA graduates will become the next generation of BH/MH practitioners.

For additional information, please contact DMurray@PAEAonline.org

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REFERENCES

¹American Academy of PAs, *PA Education–Preparation for Excellence*. Alexandria, VA: AAPA; 2020.

<https://www.aapa.org/download/61328/>. (PDF). Accessed December 3, 2020.

²National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, *2019 Statistical Profile of Certified Physician Assistants*. Washington, DC: NCCPA; 2021.

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