



Society of Rural Physicians of Canada  
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## SESSION 382

# Extending Your Reach: A Rural Doctor's Guide to Working with Physician Assistants

Integrating the physician assistant (PA) model into your rural practice can mean improved access to care for your patients while giving you, the doctor, a reliable, cost-effective medical colleague and, perhaps most importantly, an opportunity to improve your work-life balance.

PAs are skilled health professionals who support physicians in all health care settings. The PA is a physician extender and not an independent practitioner; they work under the direction of supervising physicians within a multi-disciplinary team. As part of their comprehensive and delegated responsibilities, PAs will perform physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, perform procedures, counsel on preventative health care, assist in surgery, and write prescriptions. With time and experience, a PA will have the knowledge and skills to deal with medical emergencies, specialty practice environments, as well as everyday health care needs in a rural practice.

At the conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Define the role of a physician assistant in a rural setting.
2. Identify best practice models of care and establish key elements of a medical directive.
3. Identify how to educate patients and inter-professional colleagues on the new role.