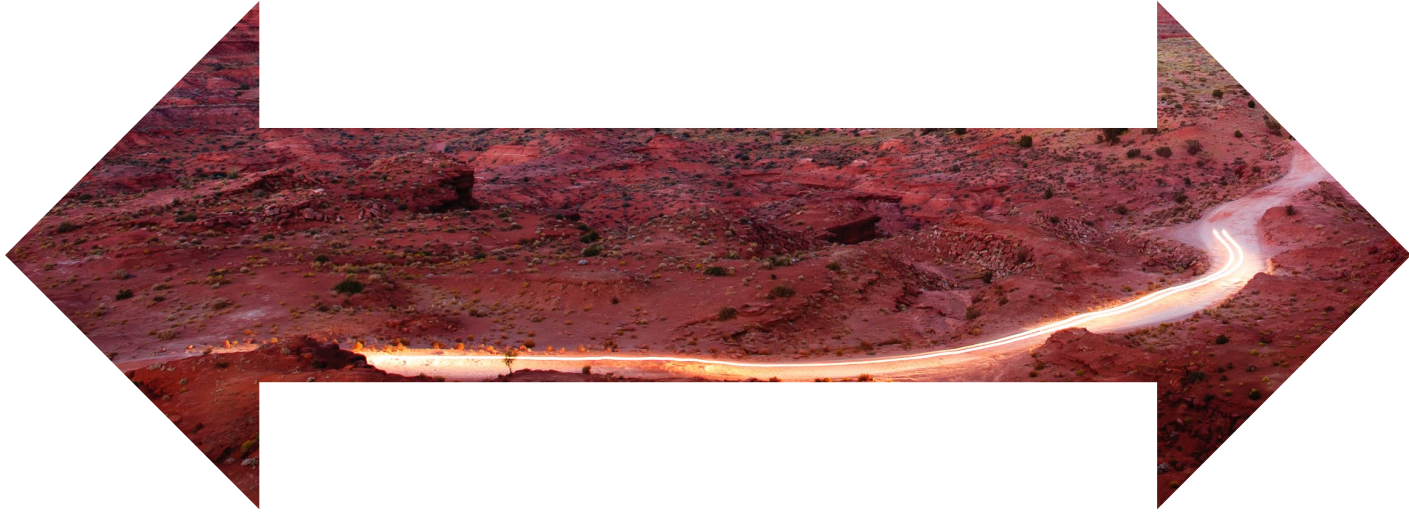


An Update on the State of Arizona Public University Investments in the PA Workforce:



Building Bidirectional Paths for the Future



Presenters

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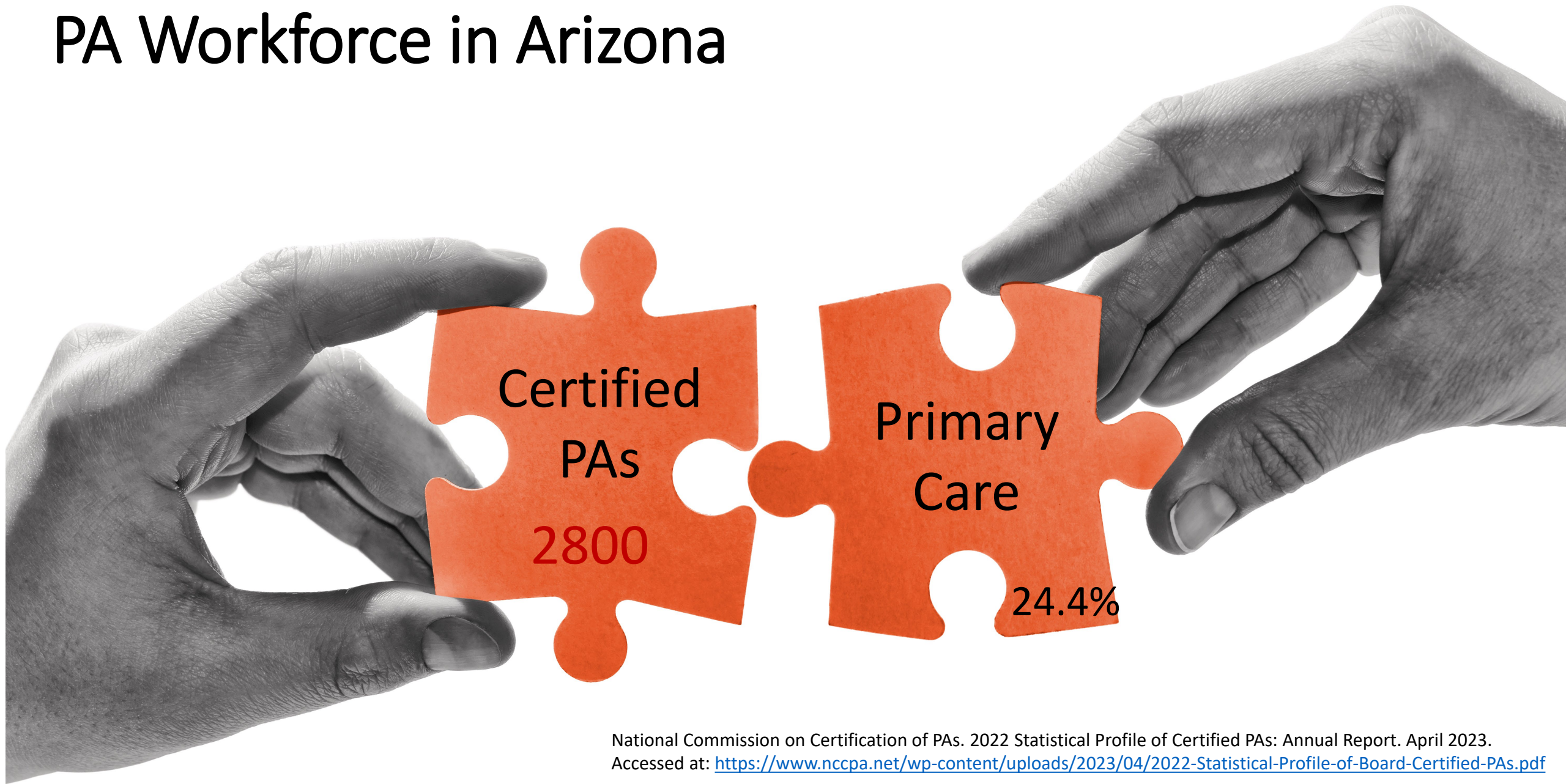
No other disclosures to report

Objectives

At the end of this presentation, participants will:

1. Understand the current state of the PA workforce in Arizona and describe the goals of the two state funded programs producing PAs;
2. Evaluate current barriers to aligning the PA workforce with rural community needs throughout the state;
3. Create a list of actionable strategies to help build stronger bidirectional paths for PA education to meet rural workforce needs.

PA Workforce in Arizona



PA Workforce in Arizona

Data compiled in the 2020
Arizona Health Workforce Profile on PAs



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
MEL & ENID ZUCKERMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Center for Rural Health

PRODUCTIVITY

- PAs or Advance Practice Nurses (APNs) handle **36%** of visits in nonmetro areas compared to **6%** of visits in large metro areas.⁸
- Rural PAs average **73.8** outpatient visits per week compared to **58.3** for PAs in metro locations.⁹
- A 2001 study found that **72.3%** of PAs in nonmetro areas were generalists compared to **40.2%** in metro areas.¹⁰

IMPACT

Hiring a rural PA “can create between 4.4 and 18.5 local jobs and create between \$280,476 and \$940,892 in revenue for the employing clinic and the hospital.”¹¹

Revised PA Practice Act

Removes the requirement for a *supervision* agreement with a specific physician for PAs with 8,000 hours of experience (*collaboration* still required)

Northern Arizona University PA

- 1st publicly-funded PA program in Arizona
- Downtown Phoenix, on campus with UA College of Medicine
- Graduated first class in 2014, current cohort is 60 students

The mission of the Northern Arizona University Physician Assistant Program is to recruit individuals of the highest possible quality from diverse backgrounds & life experiences to the profession.

Main goal is to prepare graduates to practice in diverse settings throughout Arizona, with special emphasis on rural & other underserved communities.

Northern Arizona University PA

- Majority of students with disadvantage or underrepresented
 - Class of 2022 (47)
 - 36% from rural areas, 26% Hispanic/Latino, 49% first-gen college, 13% veterans
- Most recent graduate outcomes available
 - > 80% remained in AZ
 - > 50% in primary care
 - > 40% in rural or medically underserved settings
- Established as a rural health professions in 2020
 - All students participate, 55% of clinical rotations in AZ rural/medically underserved settings – significant collaboration with AZ AHECs & AZ clinical partners
 - Substantial AHEC Scholars Program participation (50% of Class of 2024)



University of Arizona PA

- Developed as part of health workforce initiative with Arizona Legislature, ABOR, and the University of Arizona
- Will be located at the University of Arizona Health Sciences campus in Tucson
- Planning a 2025/2026 start pending accreditation approval by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA)
- Plans to start with 30 students and build to 50 in 5 years

The focus of the University of Arizona Physician Assistant Program is to build pathways from and to rural and indigenous communities with a curricular emphasis on primary care and behavioral health

University of Arizona PA

- Recruitment will focus on:
- Disadvantaged students
 - Rural
 - Indigenous communities
- Military veterans
- Underrepresented in medicine
- Rural health professions program
- AHEC Scholars Program



Barriers to Alignment

- Rural needs vs workforce reality
- Increasing number of programs/learners – competition with private programs for clinical placements & housing
- Misalignment with community needs
- Lack of communication from and with community partners

Proposed solutions

- Build pathways/pipelines for local students & health professionals (e.g., medical assistants, emergency medical technicians) to access PA education
- Build longitudinal rotations
- Partner to create PA fellowships/residencies in rural/underserved settings
- Support legislation to incentivize precepting (e.g., tax credits)
- Provide value to preceptors in the form of university benefits/collaboration
- Support legislation to prevent out-of-state “poaching” of clinical sites

Strategy – Small Group Work

- Small groups
- 5-10 minutes to collect thoughts related to questions at the table
- At your tables please identify a scribe to write the key themes from your discussions and a spokesperson to share your group's thoughts at the end of the time period

Resources & References

- Bettie Coplan, Northern Arizona University PA Director, Rural Health Professions Program, bettie.coplan@nau.edu, 602-298-4079
- Kevin Lohenry, University of Arizona PA Director
- Revised PA Practice Act in AZ, HB2043 <https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/56leg/1R/laws/0054.pdf>
- For questions, contact the Arizona Board on the Regulation of Physician Assistants (ARBOPA) <https://www.azpa.gov/> or the Arizona State Association of PAs (ASAPA) <https://www.asapa.org/page/AboutUs> (email: admin@asapa.org)
- National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, Inc. 2022 Statistical Profile of Board Certified PAs, Annual Report. April 2023. Available at www.nccpa.net/resources/nccpa-research/.
- Koch B, Coates S, Coplan B, Dehn R, Hooker R, Villarreal E, Derksen D. Arizona health workforce profile: Physician assistants. 2020. Available at https://crh.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2022-03/20200519_PAs-WorkforceProfile.pdf. For questions or comments about this report contact: Bryna Koch brynak@.arizona.edu.
- Kayingo G, Gordes KL, Fleming S, Cawley JF. Thinking outside the box: Advancing clinical education in an era of preceptor shortage. *J Physician Assist Educ*. 2023. DOI: [10.1097/jpa.0000000000000500](https://doi.org/10.1097/jpa.0000000000000500)