WHAT CAN I DO WITH A MAJOR IN … PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

OCCUPATIONAL OVERVIEW:
Physician assistants (PAs) practice medicine under the supervision of physicians and surgeons. PAs are formally trained to provide diagnostic, therapeutic, and preventive health care services, as delegated by a physician. Working as members of the health care team, they take medical histories, examine and treat patients, order and interpret laboratory tests and x-rays, and make diagnoses. They also treat minor injuries, by suturing, splinting, and casting. PAs record progress notes, instruct and counsel patients, and order or carry out therapy. In 48 States and the District of Columbia, physician assistants may prescribe medications. The duties of PAs are determined by the supervising physician and by State law. In some rural and inner city clinics PAs may be the principal care provider. PAs work in primary care specialties, such as general internal medicine, pediatric, and family medicine. Additional specialty areas include general and thoracic surgery, emergency medicine, orthopedics, and geriatrics.

EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS:
All States and the District of Columbia have legislation governing the qualifications of PAs. All jurisdictions require PAs to complete an accredited, formal education program and pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination, administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) to obtain a license and is open only to graduates of accredited PA education programs. Once certified, PAs must complete continuing medical education every two years and every six years must pass a recertification examination or complete an alternative program combining learning experience and a take-home examination. PA programs usually last at least 2 years, full time. Many accredited PA programs have clinical teaching affiliations with medical schools.

EMPLOYERS/INDUSTRIES & SUGGESTED STRATEGY:
Please ask your Career Advisor (CDF) for identifying employers or additional resources for your occupation of choice.

Employers/Industries: Clinical Practice; Outpatient care centers; Management; Education; Research; Consultation

Types of Employers: Hospitals; Clinics; Home healthcare agencies; Nursing homes; Sports medicine facilities; Rehabilitation centers; Schools; Group or private practices; Federal government; Universities and colleges

Highlighted Suggested Strategies: Maintain high achievement in basic sciences such as: anatomy, physiology, biology, chemistry, and physics; Volunteer to gain knowledge of field in medial clinics, private practice; hospitals, or other similar settings; Develop strong communication skills

STATE AND NATIONAL WAGES (2006):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>25%</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>75%</th>
<th>90%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>43,100</td>
<td>62,400</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>89,200</td>
<td>102,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>20,500</td>
<td>23,700</td>
<td>45,700</td>
<td>60,400</td>
<td>74,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

- American Academy of Physician Assistants Information Center
  http://www.aapa.org
- National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants
  http://www.nccpa.net
- New Mexico Medical Board
  http://www.nmmb.state.nm.us/
- The University of New Mexico Physician Assistant Program
  http://hsc.unm.edu/pap/index.shtml

OTHER INFORMATIONAL WEBSITES:

- http://online.onetcenter.org
- http://www.bls.gov/oco/