

Michigan Department of Community Health

Survey of Physician Assistants

Survey Findings 2011

INTRODUCTION

In fall 2011, the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) conducted the fifth annual survey of licensed physician assistants (PAs). The MDCH contracted with Public Sector Consultants Inc. (PSC) for development, implementation, and analysis of the survey. Designed in collaboration with the MDCH and the Michigan Academy of Physician Assistants, the survey contained questions about employment status, education, location and setting of main clinical practice site, percentage of time spent with supervising physician, specialty, professional satisfaction, and plans to continue practicing, as well as a number of demographic questions (age, gender, race/ethnicity). The survey questions and response frequencies are provided in the Appendix.

As of January 2011, a total of 3,535 physician assistants were licensed in Michigan. PAs are required to renew their license every two years from the first year of licensure, thus dividing the universe of PAs into two cohorts of roughly equal size. The sample for this survey was drawn from the Michigan licensure files maintained by the MDCH and the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. In 2011, 1,878 physician assistants were eligible for license renewal and received a copy of the survey instrument with their license renewal notice. Physician assistants could either return the paper version of the survey to PSC or complete the survey online when they renewed their license.

Of those eligible, 1,799 PAs renewed their license; among these, 439 responded to the survey either online or by return mail, for a response rate of 24 percent and a margin of error of ± 4.1 percent with 95 percent confidence.¹ The 439 responses include fully and partially completed surveys (i.e., those with information missing for one or more variables); this means that the sample size for individual variables will differ and the margin of error may change slightly depending upon the number of responses for that particular question.

While the results of the 2011 survey of physician assistants are generally consistent with those of the 2007—2010 surveys, differences in the data that fall outside the margin of error are noted. Key survey findings are presented below.

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

- Overall, 94 percent of physician assistants licensed in Michigan are *active* in Michigan—that is, they are working part- or full-time in Michigan as a physician assistant or in a related area (see Exhibit 1). *Unless otherwise noted, data presented in this report are for active, licensed physician assistants working in Michigan.*
 - Among active physician assistants, 86 percent are working 32 hours or more per week in PA practice or a related area and 14 percent are working less than 32 hours per week.

¹The margin of error provides the range within which the universe of possible responses is likely to fall. For example, assume that 60 percent of respondents answered “Yes” to a survey question with a margin of error of ± 4.1 percent. This means that if this question were asked 100 times among all physician assistants who renewed their license in 2011, in 95 occurrences (confidence level) the percentage of respondents who answer “Yes” would be between 55.9 percent and 64.1 percent.

- About 3 percent of physician assistants licensed in Michigan are working as a PA, but not in Michigan.
- About 3 percent of licensed physician assistants are not working as a PA.

EXHIBIT 1. Employment Characteristics of Physician Assistants, 2011

	Percentage of all PAs	Percentage of active PAs in Michigan
32 or more hours per week in PA practice or related area	84%	86%
Less than 32 hours per week in PA practice or related area	13	14
Employed but not as a PA	1	NA
Not employed and seeking employment as a PA or in a related area	0	NA
Not employed and seeking employment outside of PA practice or related area	0	NA
Temporarily not working and not looking for a job	1	NA
Retired, with no plans to return to work	2	NA
Licensed physician assistants working in PA practice or related area in Michigan	94%	NA
Licensed physician assistants working in PA-related area outside of Michigan	3	NA
Licensed physician assistants not working in PA-related area	3	NA

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health *Survey of Physician Assistants 2011*.

NOTE: NA = Not applicable. Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

PRACTICE SETTING CHARACTERISTICS

One in five active physician assistants (20 percent) work for more than one employer, and 36 percent practice at more than one site for their main employer. More than half of PAs (60 percent) say that their supervising physician is with them at their main clinical practice site 76–100 percent of the time, while only 15 percent report having a supervising physician with them at their main clinical practice site 0–25 percent of the time.

Nearly three-quarters of PAs (74 percent) have a main clinical practice in an outpatient site. When asked to identify *all* of their current employment settings, almost three-quarters (73 percent) say they work in a hospital in either an inpatient setting (45 percent) or outpatient setting (28 percent) and almost half of active PAs (46 percent) say they work in a physician’s office (see Exhibit 2).

EXHIBIT 2. Current Employment Settings of Physician Assistants, 2011

Setting	Percentage of active PAs in Michigan
Physician’s office	46%
Hospital inpatient	45
Hospital outpatient	28
Nursing home/long-term care	5
Public/community health	3

Setting	Percentage of active PAs in Michigan	
PA education program		2%
Home health care		1
Hospice		<1
Other		11

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health *Survey of Physician Assistants 2011*.

NOTE: Percentages do not equal 100 percent because respondents were asked to mark all that apply.

About two-fifths (40 percent) of PAs describe the area of their primary practice as suburban; one-third (34 percent) describe it as urban; and 26 percent say they work in a rural area or small town.

PRACTICE SPECIALTY

Approximately 34 percent of active physician assistants in Michigan specialize in primary care, that is, their primary specialty is family practice, general medicine, internal medicine, or pediatrics (see Exhibit 3).

EXHIBIT 3. Distribution of Active Physician Assistants in Michigan, by Specialty, 2011

	Specialty	
	Primary	Secondary
Allergy & Immunology	1%	1%
Anesthesiology	1	0
Cardiovascular Disease	4	4
Critical Care Medicine	1	5
Dermatology	3	2
Emergency Medicine	13	7
Endocrinology	<1	2
Family Practice	20	10
Gastroenterology	2	2
General Medicine	2	4
Geriatrics	1	4
Hospitalist	4	6
Infectious Disease	0	1
Internal Medicine (General)	9	15
Nephrology	<1	1
Neurology	1	1
Neurological Surgery	3	1
Obstetrics & Gynecology	3	0
Occupational Medicine	3	2
Oncology/Hematology	2	3
Orthopedic Surgery	8	2
Otolaryngology	1	0

	Specialty	
	Primary	Secondary
Pediatrics	2%	4%
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation	1	0
Plastic Surgery	1	0
Preventive Medicine	0	1
Psychiatry	2	1
Pulmonary Disease	1	3
Radiology	1	0
Rheumatology	1	0
Sports Medicine	0	2
Surgery (General)	5	3
Thoracic Surgery	3	2
Urology	2	1
Vascular Surgery	<1	2
Other	4	11

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health *Survey of Physician Assistants 2011*.

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

TIME SPENT PROVIDING PATIENT CARE

Active physician assistants in Michigan spend an average of almost 37 hours per week providing patient care.

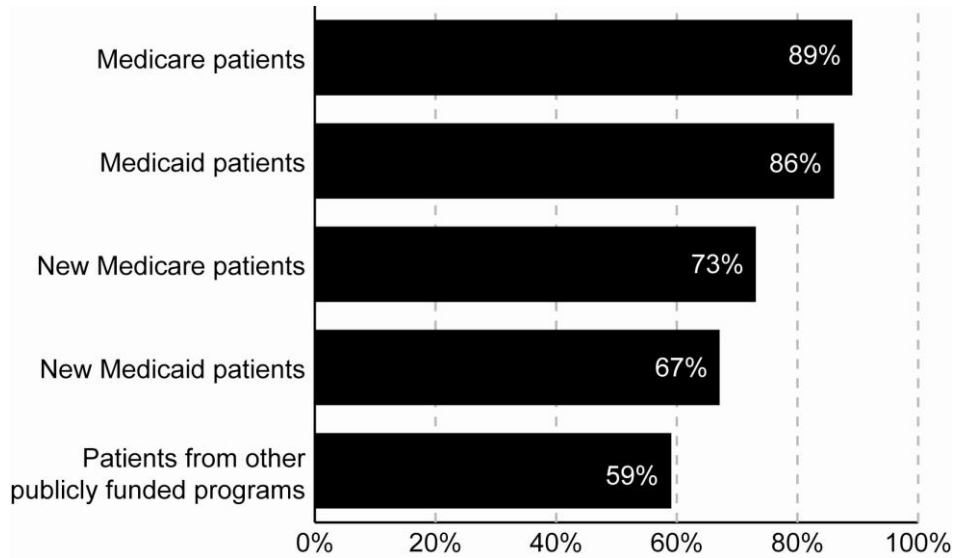
- One-fourth of these PAs (25 percent) spend 30 hours or less per week providing such care.
- About 21 percent spend more than 40 hours per week providing patient care.

PROVISION OF CARE TO MEDICAID AND MEDICARE PATIENTS

Among active physician assistants in Michigan:

- Almost nine out of ten (89 percent) report currently providing care to Medicare patients.
- About three-quarters (73 percent) are providing care to *new* Medicare patients.
- Nearly nine out of ten (86 percent) report that they are currently providing care to Medicaid patients.
- Two-thirds (67 percent) are providing care to *new* Medicaid patients.
- More than half (59 percent) are providing care to patients from other publicly funded programs (see Exhibit 4).

EXHIBIT 4. Percentage of Active Physician Assistants in Michigan Providing Care to Patients from Publicly Funded Programs, 2011



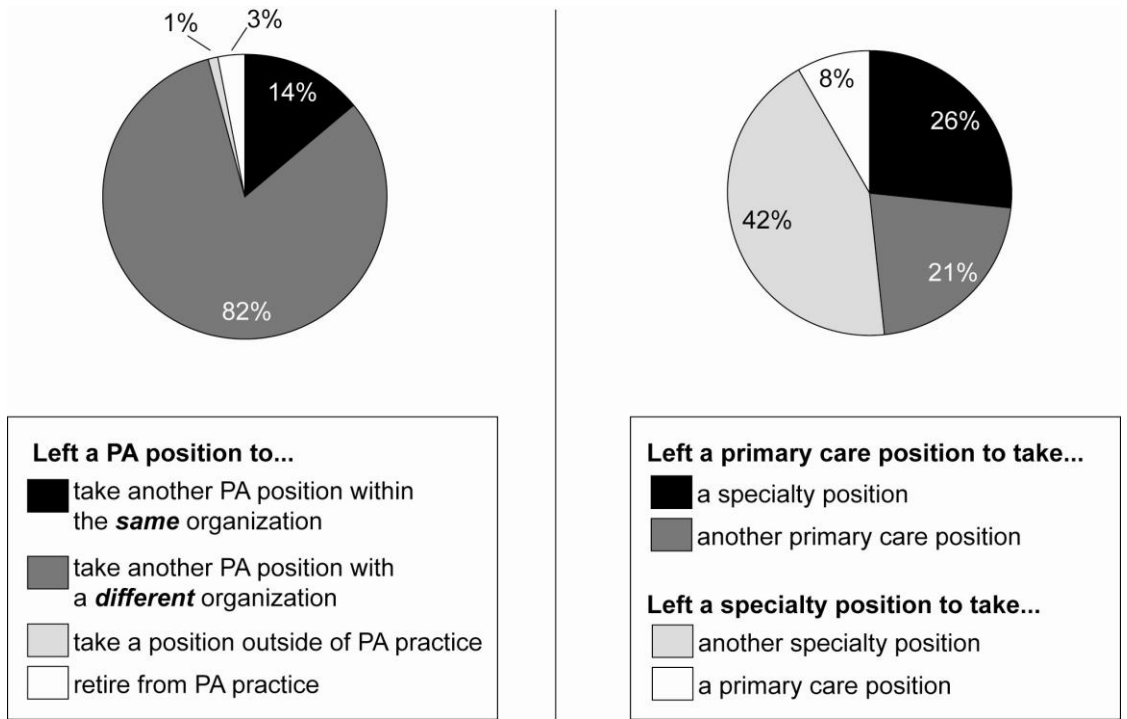
SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health *Survey of Physician Assistants 2011*.

CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT

Twenty-three percent of *all* licensed physician assistants voluntarily left a PA position within the last two years, which is consistent with findings from past surveys. Among physician assistants who voluntarily left a PA position in the last two years, the majority (82 percent) took another PA position with a different organization, also consistent with findings from past surveys. However, 14 percent of physician assistants in 2011 report taking another PA position within the *same* organization, compared to 4 percent in 2010 (see Exhibit 5).

Of those physician assistants who left one PA position for another in 2011, 26 percent left a primary care position to take a specialty position, compared to 18 percent in 2010. Eight percent left a specialty position to take a primary care position, compared to 17 percent in 2010.

EXHIBIT 5. Physician Assistants Who Voluntarily Left a PA Position within the Last Two Years, 2011



SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health *Survey of Physician Assistants 2011*.
 NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

FUTURE PRACTICE PLANS

Almost four out of five active physician assistants in Michigan (about 80 percent) plan to maintain their present level of patient care hours for the next three years, a proportion that has remained fairly constant since 2007. Future practice plans of active physician assistants are laid out in Exhibit 6.

EXHIBIT 6. Physician Assistant Practice Plans for the Next Three Years, 2011

Practice plan	Percentage of active PAs in Michigan
Maintain the number of patient care hours I currently work	80%
Increase patient care hours	9
Significantly reduce patient care hours	8
Relocate to another state	5
Retire	5
Relocate to another Michigan location	4

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health *Survey of Physician Assistants 2011*.
 NOTE: Percentages do not equal 100 percent because respondents were asked to mark all that apply.

Of the 13 percent of active physician assistants who plan to retire or significantly reduce their patient care hours, “age” (56 percent) and “lifestyle changes” (36 percent) are the most commonly cited factors contributing to this decision (see Exhibit 7). In 2011, the proportion of PAs citing age as a factor in their decision is higher than in previous surveys. The next most common factor is “increasing administrative/regulatory burden” (26 percent).

The percentage of physician assistants citing the following job-related factors as influencing their decision to retire or reduce their patient care hours has increased since 2009:

- Increasing administrative/regulatory burden (26 percent in 2011, compared to 22 percent in 2010 and 10 percent in 2009)
- Inadequate salary/wages (16 percent in 2011, compared to 13 percent in 2010 and 5 percent in 2009)
- Employer/employee conflict (8 percent in 2011, compared to 7 percent in 2010 and 0 percent in 2009)

EXHIBIT 7. Distribution of Factors Contributing to Decisions to Retire or Reduce Patient Care Hours, 2011

Factors	Percentage of active PAs in Michigan who plan to retire or reduce patient care hours
Age	56%
Lifestyle changes	36
Increasing administrative/regulatory burden	26
General lack of job satisfaction	22
Childbearing/childrearing	18
Inadequate salary/wages	16
Personal or family health concerns	16
Inadequate reimbursement for services from insurers	12
Employer/employee conflict	8
Moved to management/consulting/teaching/research	8
Other	10

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health *Survey of Physician Assistants 2011*.
 NOTE: Percentages do not equal 100 percent because respondents were asked to mark all that apply.

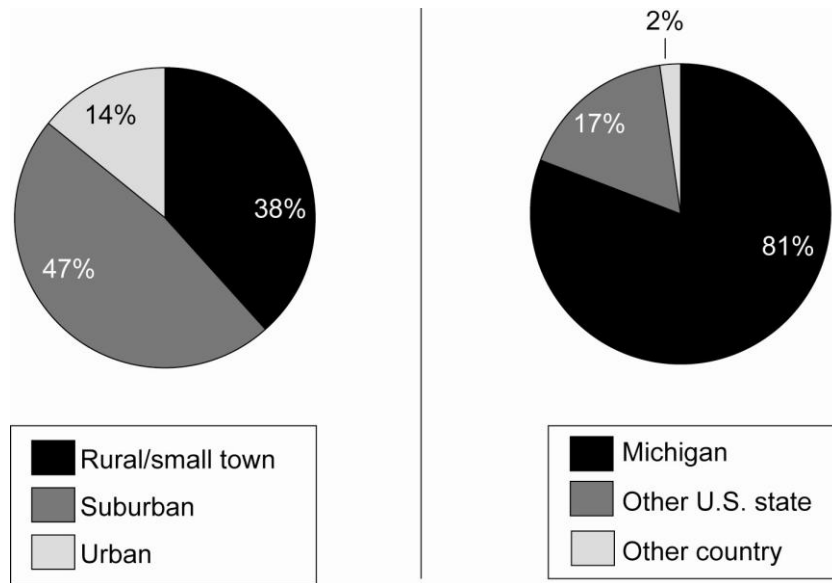
PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION

Physician assistants report high levels of professional satisfaction. Nearly all (97 percent) are either extremely satisfied (68 percent) or somewhat satisfied (29 percent) in their work. The level of professional satisfaction among physician assistants is similar to previous years, with the exception of 2008 when 57 percent of PAs said they were extremely satisfied.

ORIGIN AND EDUCATION BACKGROUND

A large majority (81 percent) of active Michigan-licensed physician assistants grew up in Michigan, 17 percent grew up in another U.S. state, and about 2 percent grew up in another country (see Exhibit 8). Nearly half (47 percent) grew up in a suburban area, 38 percent come from a rural area/small town, and 14 percent grew up in an urban area.

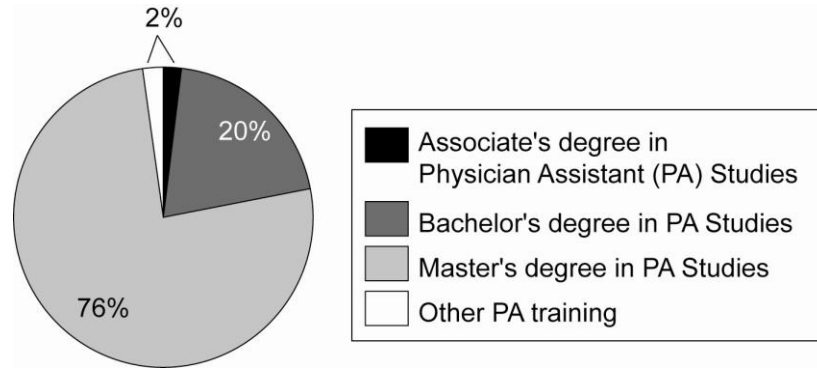
EXHIBIT 8. Origin of Active Physician Assistants in Michigan, 2011



SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health *Survey of Physician Assistants 2011*.
NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

The highest education level achieved by three-quarters (76 percent) of active physician assistants in Michigan is a master's degree in PA Studies, compared to 68 percent in 2009 and 69 percent in 2010. Twenty percent hold a bachelor's degree in PA Studies; 2 percent have completed an associate's degree in PA Studies; another 2 percent do not hold a degree but have received other PA training (see Exhibit 9).

EXHIBIT 9. Highest Degree Achieved by Active Physician Assistants in Michigan, 2011

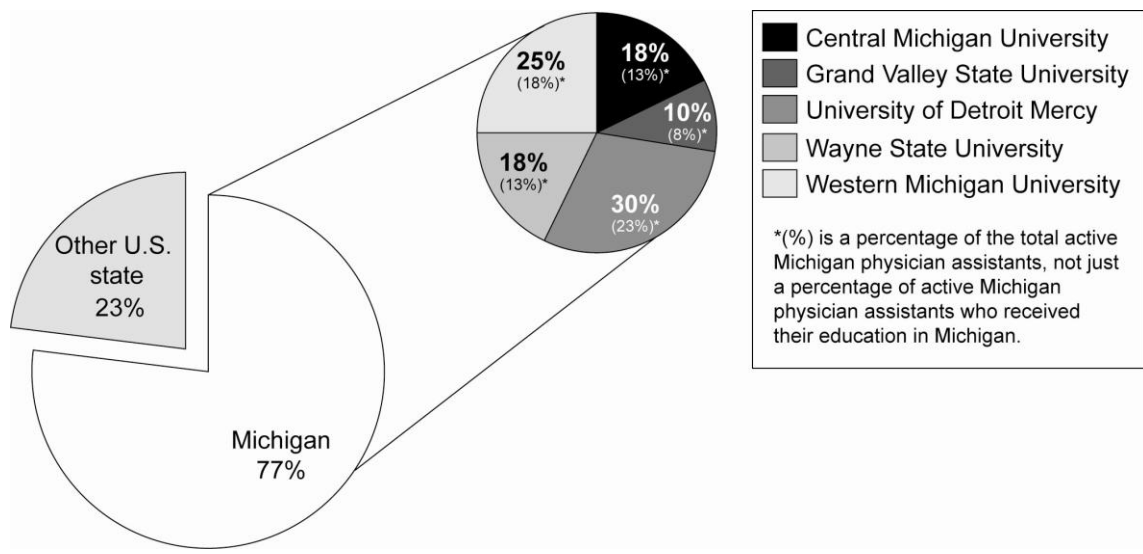


SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health *Survey of Physician Assistants 2011*.

Among active physician assistants in Michigan, about 77 percent received their entry-level physician assistant degree from a PA program in Michigan and 23 percent attended a PA program in another state (see Exhibit 10). Among those who received their entry-level degree from a PA program in Michigan, 30 percent attended University of Detroit Mercy, 25 percent attended Western Michigan University, 18 percent attended Central Michigan University, another 18 percent attended Wayne State University, and 10 percent attended Grand Valley State University. Four percent of physician assistants are either enrolled in or have completed a postgraduate physician assistant residency program.

The largest proportion (48 percent) of PAs surveyed graduated from an entry-level physician assistant program within the decade of the new millennium, 2000–2009. Twenty-one percent of PAs surveyed graduated from an entry-level physician assistant program in the previous decade, 1990–1999; while 13 percent graduated in 2010 alone.

EXHIBIT 10. Education Background of Active Physician Assistants in Michigan, 2011



SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health *Survey of Physician Assistants 2011*.
 NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Active physician assistants are involved in a variety of professional activities outside of clinical practice, including teaching, research, and administration (see Exhibit 11).

EXHIBIT 11. Distribution of Professional Activities of Active Physician Assistants, 2011

Professional activity	Percentage of active PAs in Michigan
Teaching	32%
Research	10
Administration in a private practice	6
Administration in PA education program, hospital, health plan, nursing home, or clinic	4

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health *Survey of Physician Assistants 2011*.

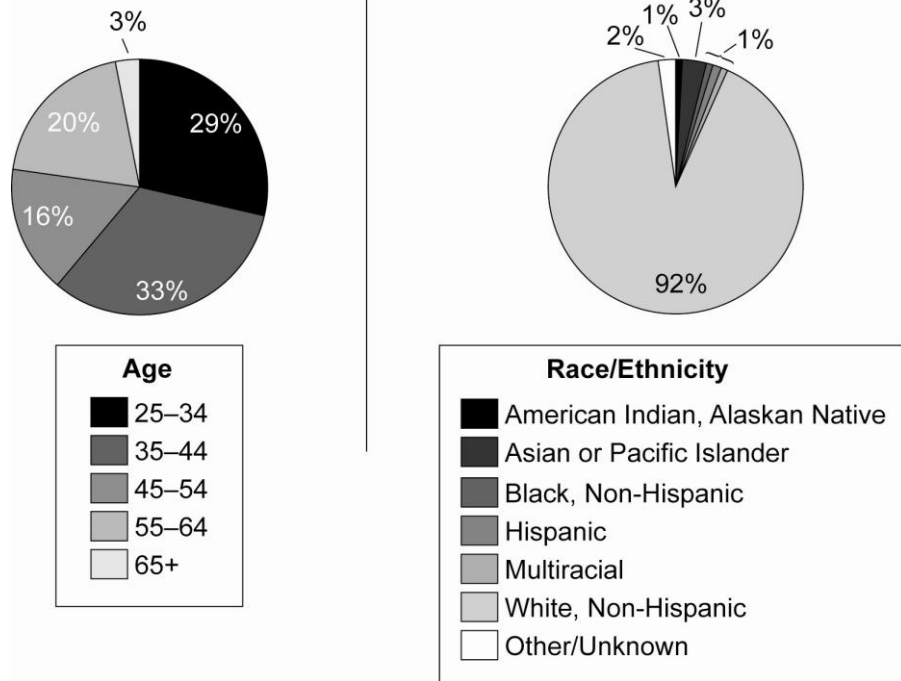
GENDER, AGE, AND RACE/ETHNICITY

Among active physician assistants in Michigan:

- Thirty-two percent are male; 68 percent are female, similar to the 2010 figures.
- Twenty-three percent are aged 55 or older; 62 percent are under the age of 45 (see Exhibit 12).

- Ninety-two percent are white; 3 percent are Asian or Pacific Islander; 1 percent are black, non-Hispanic; another 1 percent are American Indian/Alaskan Native; and yet another 1 percent are Hispanic.

EXHIBIT 12. Age and Race/Ethnicity of Active Physician Assistants in Michigan, 2011



SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health *Survey of Physician Assistants 2011*.
 NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Appendix

Survey Questions and Response Frequencies* (N=439)

1. In what year were you born?

Age	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<25	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
25-34	34.2	35.7	31.4	32.9	28.7
35-44	23.6	21.0	23.8	25.5	32.5
45-54	23.6	26.1	23.0	23.6	15.7
55-64	17.2	14.1	19.9	15.9	19.8
65+	1.3	0.8	2.0	1.9	3.3

2. What is your current employment status? (Mark **one**)

	Percentage of All Physician Assistants				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. 32 or more hours per week in PA practice or related area	84.4%	84.1%	83.0%	84.5%	84.3%
b. Less than 32 hours per week in PA practice or related area	11.8	11.7	13.0	11.6	13.0
c. Employed but not as a PA	0.8	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.7
d. Not employed and seeking employment as a PA or in a related area	1.4	1.0	1.8	1.1	0.0
e. Not employed and seeking employment outside of PA practice or related area	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
f. Temporarily not working and not looking for a job	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.9	0.5
g. Retired, with no plans to return to work	0.3	0.7	0.5	0.3	1.6

	Percentage of Active Physician Assistants in Michigan				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. 32 or more hours per week in PA practice or related area	87.8%	88.0%	86.5%	87.7%	86.4%
b. Less than 32 hours per week in PA practice or related area	12.2	12.0	13.5	12.3	13.6
c. Employed but not as a PA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
d. Not employed and seeking employment as a PA or in a related area	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

* Unless otherwise noted, all frequencies are for *active* physician assistants. NA = Not applicable. Percentages in tables may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

	Percentage of Active Physician Assistants in Michigan				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
e. Not employed and seeking employment outside of PA practice or related area	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
f. Temporarily not working and not looking for a job	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
g. Retired, with no plans to return to work	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

3. What is your gender?

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Female	62.0%	70.3%	63.3%	68.5%	67.6%
b. Male	38.0	29.7	36.7	31.5	32.4

4. What is your race/ethnicity?

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. American Indian, Alaskan Native	0.4%	1.4%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%
b. Asian or Pacific Islander	2.8	1.4	2.5	2.4	3.4
c. Black, Non-Hispanic	2.6	3.1	2.3	3.1	0.5
d. Hispanic	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.0	0.7
e. Multiracial	0.6	1.2	0.6	0.7	0.5
f. White, Non-Hispanic	91.5	91.3	91.7	90.8	92.0
g. Other/Unknown	0.9	0.6	1.3	1.4	2.2

5. Where do you live? (Mark one)

	Percentage of All Licensed Physician Assistants				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Michigan	94.4%	93.6%	94.4%	95.2%	98.3%
b. Other U.S. state	5.2	6.1	5.3	4.5	1.2
c. Canada	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.5
d. Other country	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0

6. Where is your primary place of employment?

	Percentage of All Licensed Physician Assistants				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Michigan	95.4%	94.0%	96.1%	95.9%	96.5%
b. Other U.S. state	4.3	5.6	3.7	3.9	3.5
c. Canada	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
d. Other country	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0

7. Please indicate the ZIP Code for your main clinical practice site. _____

8. Do you work for more than one employer?

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Yes	19.9%	17.3%	17.5%	19.7%	19.5%
b. No	80.1	82.7	82.5	80.3	80.5

9. Do you practice at more than one site for your main employer?

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Yes	35.1%	34.2%	33.8%	37.3%	36.3%
b. No	64.9	65.8	66.2	62.7	63.7

10. Approximately what percentage of the time is your supervising physician at your main clinical practice site when you are?

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. 0–25 percent	12.9%	14.8%	14.5%	16.6%	15.4%
b. 26–50 percent	10.8	9.2	10.8	11.7	10.8
c. 51–75 percent	16.3	19.1	16.4	15.3	13.4
d. 76–100 percent	60.1	56.7	58.3	56.4	60.4

11. Is your main clinical practice an outpatient or inpatient site?

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Outpatient	65.6%	66.9%	67.1%	66.2%	64.0%
b. Inpatient	32.5	30.0	31.0	32.1	33.1
c. Not applicable	1.9	3.1	1.9	1.7	2.9

12. Identify your current employment setting(s). (Mark **all** that apply)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Hospital Inpatient	40.7%	41.3%	40.5%	39.5%	44.7%
b. Hospital outpatient	26.9	26.8	26.1	23.5	28.4
c. Physician's office	51.7	51.2	52.1	50.8	46.1
d. Nursing home/long-term care facility	5.9	3.5	5.2	5.4	4.6
e. Home health care	1.5	0.6	1.7	1.7	0.7
f. Public/community health	4.3	5.0	2.9	5.7	3.2
g. Hospice	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.2
h. PA education program	2.2	1.5	1.7	1.2	2.4
i. Other	7.4	6.9	8.2	8.4	11.4
j. None or not active as a physician assistant	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0

13. How many *hours per week* do you spend providing direct patient care?

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Mean in hours	37.34	36.79	36.19	37.11	36.54

14. Overall, how would you rate your professional satisfaction as a physician assistant?

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Extremely satisfied	66.0%	57.4%	70.8%	67.7%	68.0%
b. Somewhat satisfied	31.2	27.3	26.3	28.0	28.5
c. Neutral	1.9	2.3	1.7	2.9	1.7
d. Somewhat dissatisfied	0.9	4.3	0.8	1.2	1.5
e. Extremely dissatisfied	0.0	8.7	0.4	0.2	0.2

15. What is the highest physician assistant degree you have achieved? (Mark **one**)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Associate's degree in Physician Assistant (PA) Studies	4.8%	2.5%	3.6%	3.2%	2.0%
b. Bachelor's degree in PA Studies	26.3	26.6	25.5	24.0	20.2
c. Master's degree in PA Studies	66.2	67.8	67.8	69.0	75.9
d. Other PA training	2.6	3.1	3.1	3.7	2.0

16. Are you involved in any of the following professional activities? (Mark **all** that apply)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Research	10.0%	11.0%	9.5%	8.1%	10.4%
b. Teaching	33.3	32.4	33.4	29.2	31.8
c. Administration in a private practice	7.6	5.0	7.1	6.6	5.6
d. Administration in a PA education program, hospital, health plan, nursing home, or clinic	4.4	5.0	5.9	6.1	4.1

17. Are you currently providing care to...

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Medicaid patients?	83.1%	82.0%	86.5%	85.3%	85.9%
b. New Medicaid patients?	71.1	64.5	68.7	68.9	67.0
c. Medicare patients?	88.0	85.5	89.1	88.0	88.8
d. New Medicare patients?	77.8	67.2	73.9	72.3	72.8
e. Patients from other publicly funded programs?	60.4	53.9	56.5	55.2	59.0

18. Mark the practice specialty(ies) in which you spend most of your professional time. Mark **ONE primary** and, if applicable, **ONE secondary** specialty.

	Specialty									
	Primary					Secondary				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
1. Allergy & Immunology	0.8%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.2%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	1.2%	0.7%
2. Anesthesiology	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0
3. Cardiovascular Disease	3.8	6.9	6.0	4.4	4.2	2.8	2.4	4.3	3.7	3.7
4. Critical Care Medicine	1.3	1.0	0.4	1.4	1.2	3.9	3.9	3.2	4.1	5.1
5. Dermatology	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.7	0.0	0.9	0.5	0.8	1.5

	Specialty									
	Primary					Secondary				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
6. Emergency Medicine	11.4%	9.6%	11.4%	10.3%	13.0%	13.5%	13.1%	9.7%	9.1%	7.4%
7. Endocrinology	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.4	1.5
8. Family Practice	21.4	24.0	21.8	22.3	20.3	6.2	10.7	8.6	9.1	10.3
9. Gastroenterology	2.1	1.4	1.7	0.7	2.0	0.6	0.5	1.6	1.2	2.2
10. General Medicine	3.2	2.4	2.9	3.7	2.2	7.3	2.9	2.7	5.0	4.4
11. Geriatrics	0.4	1.2	0.6	1.6	0.7	4.5	1.5	7.6	4.1	4.4
12. Hospitalist	2.8	3.0	4.1	2.3	3.7	1.7	2.9	1.6	4.6	5.9
13. Infectious Disease	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.6	0.9	0.0	0.4	0.7
14. Internal Medicine (General)	9.3	8.1	8.1	9.1	9.1	18.0	14.1	19.5	14.1	14.7
15. Nephrology	1.1	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.9	0.0	0.4	0.7
16. Neurology	0.2	0.8	0.2	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.7
17. Neurological Surgery	3.0	2.2	3.1	1.6	2.9	0.0	1.5	1.6	0.8	0.7
18. Obstetrics & Gynecology	2.1	1.8	1.9	1.6	2.5	0.0	3.9	2.7	2.1	0.0
19. Occupational Medicine	3.2	2.8	2.3	2.3	2.5	7.3	3.4	3.2	3.3	2.2
20. Oncology Hematology	3.4	3.9	1.9	3.7	2.0	1.1	0.0	0.5	0.4	2.9
21. Orthopedic Surgery	6.8	5.7	7.5	7.0	7.8	5.1	3.4	2.2	0.8	1.5
22. Otolaryngology	0.8	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
23. Pediatrics	1.7	3.5	2.1	3.0	2.0	4.5	2.4	6.5	3.7	3.7
24. Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation	1.9	0.8	1.5	1.4	0.7	0.6	0.5	1.1	0.4	0.0
25. Plastic Surgery	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.7	1.1	0.9	0.0	0.4	0.0
26. Preventive Medicine	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.9	0.5	2.5	0.7
27. Psychiatry	1.5	1.8	1.2	1.7	2.0	1.7	5.3	2.7	3.3	0.7
28. Pulmonary Disease	0.2	0.4	0.0	1.0	0.5	0.6	0.9	0.5	1.7	2.9
29. Radiology	1.1	0.8	1.5	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0
30. Rheumatology	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
31. Sports Medicine	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	2.4	3.8	2.9	1.5
32. Surgery (General)	4.6	4.3	3.7	4.0	4.7	1.7	2.4	0.5	4.1	2.9
33. Thoracic Surgery	1.7	1.2	1.9	1.4	2.5	1.1	1.5	2.2	1.2	2.2
34. Urology	0.9	1.4	1.0	0.7	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.7

	Specialty									
	Primary					Secondary				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
35. Vascular Surgery	0.2%	0.8%	0.2%	0.9%	0.2%	2.2%	1.9%	2.2%	2.1%	2.2%
36. Other	4.0	4.1	6.0	6.8	4.2	7.3	11.2	9.2	10.0	11.0

19. How would you describe the area where you grew up? (Please mark an answer in **both** sections A & B).

SECTION A					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Rural/small town	38.6%	39.0%	40.8%	39.9%	38.4%
b. Suburban	43.9	47.1	44.7	45.5	47.2
c. Urban	17.4	13.9	14.5	14.6	14.4
SECTION B					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Michigan	80.3%	78.2%	80.9%	79.4%	80.8%
b. Other U.S. state	17.9	19.7	17.8	18.0	17.3
c. Other country	1.8	2.1	1.2	2.6	1.9

20. How would you describe the area of your primary practice?

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Rural/small town	Not asked	26.8%	26.6%	28.5%	26.3%
b. Suburban	Not asked	40.5	42.7	39.6	39.8
c. Urban	Not asked	32.5	30.7	31.8	33.9

21. In what year did you graduate from an entry-level physician assistant program (i.e., when did you first receive a degree that allowed you to obtain a license as a physician assistant)?

Decade	2011
1972-1979	6.2%
1980-1989	10.9
1990-1999	21.3
2000-2009	48.2
2010	12.5

22. A. Where did you receive your highest-/entry-level physician assistant degree?

	Highest-level				Entry-level
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Michigan	75.3%	70.1%	75.0%	70.6%	76.6%
b. Other U.S. state	24.7	29.7	25.0	29.4	23.4
c. Other country	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0

B. If in Michigan, please specify the school.

	Highest-level				Entry-level
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Central Michigan University	13.3%	17.5%	16.4%	17.7%	17.7%
b. Grand Valley State University	11.0	10.7	10.8	11.1	10.0
c. University of Detroit Mercy	32.0	33.5	28.8	28.8	30.0
d. Wayne State University	16.5	16.3	17.7	17.4	17.7
e. Western Michigan University	27.3	22.0	26.4	25.0	24.5

NOTE: In 2011, this question was changed from asking where a PA received their highest-level degree to asking where a PA received their entry-level degree.

23. Are you enrolled in or have you completed a postgraduate physician assistant residency program?

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Yes	4.7%	4.5%	4.6%	4.9%	4.2%
b. No	95.3	95.3	95.4	95.1	95.8

24. Have you voluntarily left a physician assistant position within the last two years?

	Percentage of All Licensed PAs				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Yes	25.2%	25.0%	23.2%	21.4%	23.3%
b. No	74.8	74.8	76.8	78.6	76.7

25. If you voluntarily left a physician assistant position within the last two years, was it to... (Mark **one**)

	Percentage of licensed PAs who voluntarily left a PA position within the last two years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. take another PA position within the same organization?	8.5%	5.3%	7.1%	3.8%	14.3%
b. take another PA position with a different organization?	85.1	89.4	88.9	87.9	81.6
c. take a position outside of PA practice?	5.0	1.5	0.0	3.0	1.0
d. retire from PA practice?	1.4	3.8	4.0	5.3	3.1

26. If you voluntarily left a physician assistant (PA) position within the last two years to take another PA position, did you...

	Percentage of licensed PAs who left a PA position to take another PA position				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. leave a primary care position to take a specialty position?	18.2%	15.3%	16.7%	17.8%	25.8%
b. leave a primary care position to take another primary care position?	Not asked	29.0	27.5	30.5	20.6
c. leave a specialty position to take another specialty position?	54.5	40.3	44.2	34.7	42.3
d. leave a specialty position to take a primary care position?	10.6	14.5	11.7	16.9	8.2

27. In the next three years, I plan to... (Mark **all** that apply)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. maintain the number of patient care hours I currently work.	79.8%	78.4%	82.8%	80.2%	79.5%
b. increase patient care hours.	9.3	9.8	9.4	10.5	9.4
c. significantly reduce patient care hours.	7.4	7.3	6.1	7.1	7.7
d. relocate to another Michigan location.	5.9	5.6	3.6	3.4	4.4
e. relocate to another state.	4.6	6.2	4.6	5.2	4.7
f. retire.	2.4	1.9	1.5	2.4	5.4

29. If you are retiring or reducing your patient care hours, what are the factors that led to this decision? (Mark **all** that apply)

	Percentage of licensed PAs who plan to retire or reduce patient care hours in the next three years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Age	31.9%	40.4%	40.0%	42.6%	56.0%
b. General lack of job satisfaction	21.3	14.9	10.0	13.0	22.0
c. Childbearing/childrearing	31.9	31.9	45.0	31.5	18.0
d. Lifestyle changes	42.6	40.4	20.0	29.6	36.0
e. Inadequate salary/wages	Not asked	Not asked	5.0	13.0	16.0
f. Medical malpractice insurance cost	0.0	10.6	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked
g. Personal or family health concerns	17.0	19.1	10.0	16.7	16.0
h. Increasing administrative/regulatory burden	19.1	17.0	10.0	22.2	26.0
i. Employer/employee conflict	0.0	4.3	0.0	7.4	8.0
j. Inadequate reimbursement for services from insurers*	21.3	17.0	0.0*	14.8	12.0
k. Moved to management/ consulting/ teaching/ research	6.4	4.3	7.5	7.4	8.0
l. Other	19.1	12.8	12.5	13.0	10.0

*Prior to 2009, this response option read "Inadequate reimbursement for services." In 2009, the phrase "from insurers" was added.

The following question was removed from the survey in 2011:

In your practice, does someone use a computer or computer-like device (e.g., PDA) to receive or transmit... (Mark **all** that apply)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. lab results, x-rays, or hospital records?	73.5%	71.2%	74.2%	77.9%	Not asked
b. prescriptions?	34.6	35.1	52.9	58.8	Not asked
c. claims information?	34.6	35.7	36.5	43.2	Not asked
d. electronic health records?	50.0	49.6	59.0	61.3	Not asked
e. communication with your patients	16.9	15.4	17.6	23.6	Not asked
f. information about treatment alternatives	35.0	31.1	31.9	35.1	Not asked
g. continuing medical education (CME) credits?	57.8	60.8	63.5	63.5	Not asked