

## **RUSH UNIVERSITY**

### Chicago Region

- Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies

Rush University has informed the Illinois Board of Higher Education of its intent to offer the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies.

The purpose of the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies is to prepare advanced level physician assistants, trained to deliver services in hospitals, clinics, and physicians' offices. The program will provide students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to perform as competent physician assistants and to prepare graduates with an area of with an area of clinical specialization. A research project will be required of students in the program in order to introduce them to research methods. The program will prepare graduates for board certification and registry by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) in conjunction with the National Board of Medical Examiners and the licensure examination in the State of Illinois.

Physician assistants (PAs) care for patients under the supervision of a physician, in multiple areas of medical practice. As part of their comprehensive responsibilities, PAs apply scientific principles to conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventative health care, assist in surgery, write prescriptions and help in disease management. Physician assistants are found in all areas of medicine – family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, orthopedics, sports medicine and pulmonary care. The physician assistant sees a diverse group of patients ranging from newborn infants and pediatric patients to adults and the elderly. Physician assistants work in all health care settings, including acute care hospitals, intensive care units, emergency departments, skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitation units, doctor's offices, and clinics. Currently, there is a shortage of physician assistants in Illinois and the US. This shortage is expected to worsen due to population growth, the aging of the population and changes in disease prevalence. There are only four physician assistant programs in Illinois and none which include a specialty track as part of the regular program.

Offered by the College of Health Science at Rush University, the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies is a professional degree. Entering students will have completed an undergraduate degree to include pre-requisite course work in mathematics, communications, psychology, chemistry, anatomy, physiology, and microbiology.

The proposed program results from extensive discussions with University leaders, physicians, clinical specialists, practitioners and leaders in the profession. The program will offer entry-level training and the opportunity for specialty training in several areas including orthopedics, surgery and pulmonary medicine.

Course work and clinical fieldwork will be completed at Rush University Medical Center and its affiliated clinical sites. The initial enrollment for the program is expected to be 12 students per year, with a target of 24 entering students per year beginning in the third year of program operations.

Rush University College of Health Sciences currently offers bachelors and masters degrees in many of the allied health professions. The Masters of Science in Physician Assistant Studies will

be able to draw upon the resources of the University and Rush University Medical Center in offering state-of-the-art education and clinical training.

Requests for additional information about the proposed program should be directed to Dr. David Shelledy, Dean, College of Health Sciences, Rush University, 600 S. Paulina St., AAC Suite 1006, Chicago, IL 60612-3832. Email: [David\\_Shelledy@Rush.edu](mailto:David_Shelledy@Rush.edu).