

What is a Physician's Assistant?

Nancy Duong is the physician assistant at our office, but many patients haven't come across a physician's assistant (commonly called a "PA") before. So, what is a PA anyway? A physician's assistant is a healthcare professional that is licensed to practice medicine with the supervision of a licensed physician. PA's conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and read tests, assist in surgery and write prescriptions. PA's can create treatment plans and exercise autonomy in making medical decisions. PA's are educated using the medical model to complement physician training rather than the nursing model used for nurse practitioners. PA's complete their bachelor's degree and then an additional two years of specialized training before becoming licensed. They also must sit for national boards every six years to re-certify.

Nancy Duong chose to become a PA because it was a better suited profession for her long term goals than a physician. "Because of the strong desire I had to become a mother; and the desire to be able to spend time with my children, I decided to go to physician assistant school. I knew that becoming a physician would cause me to compromise my family goals," said Nancy. "Being responsible for a practice and seeing patients on a day to day basis is a lot of work. Now that I am the mother of two beautiful boys, I am able to spend time with them outside of work and not have the constant concerns of the business side of running my own practice."

Nancy and Dr. Hamilton operate in the true model of a "physician's assistant" with both of them sharing patients and working together throughout the day. Dr. Hamilton was not looking for a PA when Nancy shared her interest in joining the practice. "I had never wanted to compromise patient care and wasn't sure that the PA model would work for me," said Dr. Hamilton. "After getting to know Nancy, and seeing the vast dermatological knowledge that she possesses, I knew that I needed to make it work with her. Nancy is the best PA I have ever come across and has more skill in diagnosis and treatment plans than many of my physician colleagues."

Over the last seven years that Nancy has been with the practice, she and Dr. Hamilton have continued to build on the teamwork that they started out with. "The best thing about Nancy is that although she is very skilled and knowledgeable, she isn't too proud to ask a question," Dr. Hamilton remarked. "She and I are able to work together because she is so willing to be open about any concerns that arise throughout the day while seeing patients."

We want to thank you for being a part of our practice.

Sincerely,
Dr. Tiffani Hamilton

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