

Physician Assistants in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

Physician Assistants working in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery work in a variety of settings that encompass cosmetic surgery, burn management and reconstruction of congenital, cancer and trauma related injuries. In particular, the PA in the cosmetics subspecialty will often have to deal with celebrities and other individuals who require heightened attention to confidentiality. Many Plastic surgeons look for PAs with experience in a variety of surgical specialties as these skills frequently come into play within the scope of the practice.

Since many Plastic surgeons practice in office-based operating rooms and "Surgicenters", the PA must be current in BCLS, ACLS and be comfortable with management of cardiac and respiratory emergencies. The Plastic surgery PA works in all settings from the office to the ED. Below are listed the basic requirements for PAs interested in pursuing this surgical specialty.

Office:

- Knowledge of reimbursement issues.
- Knowledge of patient insurance plans and the ability to communicate with insurance companies in writing.
- Attend at least one plastic surgical CME offering yearly.
- Maintain skills of the Primary Care PA.
- Consult with product and pharmaceutical representatives.
- Ability to perform wound checks, suture and drain removals.
- Ability to perform minor surgical procedures without in-room supervision.
- Ability to perform non-surgical cosmetic procedures such as Botox®, facial fillers and lasers without in-room supervision.
- Ability to perform consultations in the surgeon's absence.
- Ability to take call.
- Dictation of operative and discharge summaries.

Operating Room:

- Ability to first assist on all cases.
- Suture skills equal to that of the surgeon.
- Knowledge of anatomy of all cases.
- Knowledge of latest surgical techniques.
- Ability to contribute intelligent input into the surgical procedure.
- Perform inventory of all necessary Plastic surgical supplies and prostheses.

Hospital:

- Ability to write orders in Recovery Room, ICU and floor.
- Follow patients and write daily progress notes.

- Maintain clear communication with the attending surgeon and any consultants regarding patient status both pre and post discharge.

PA's with this compendium of knowledge and skills will find Plastic and Reconstructive surgery a rewarding and fascinating specialty. The full breadth of your PA training, from basic primary-care assessments to advanced intraoperative techniques, will be utilized in the care of your patients.

In conclusion: PA's in Plastic Surgery have the ability to bridge a patient/physician gap in a creative manner thus serving the plastic surgeon in the ability to be aware of problems relating to the procedures and comprehensive abilities of the patient. Input of this nature is valuable in Quality Assurance and in Loss Prevention.

Contact any of the APSPA officers for more detailed information.

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