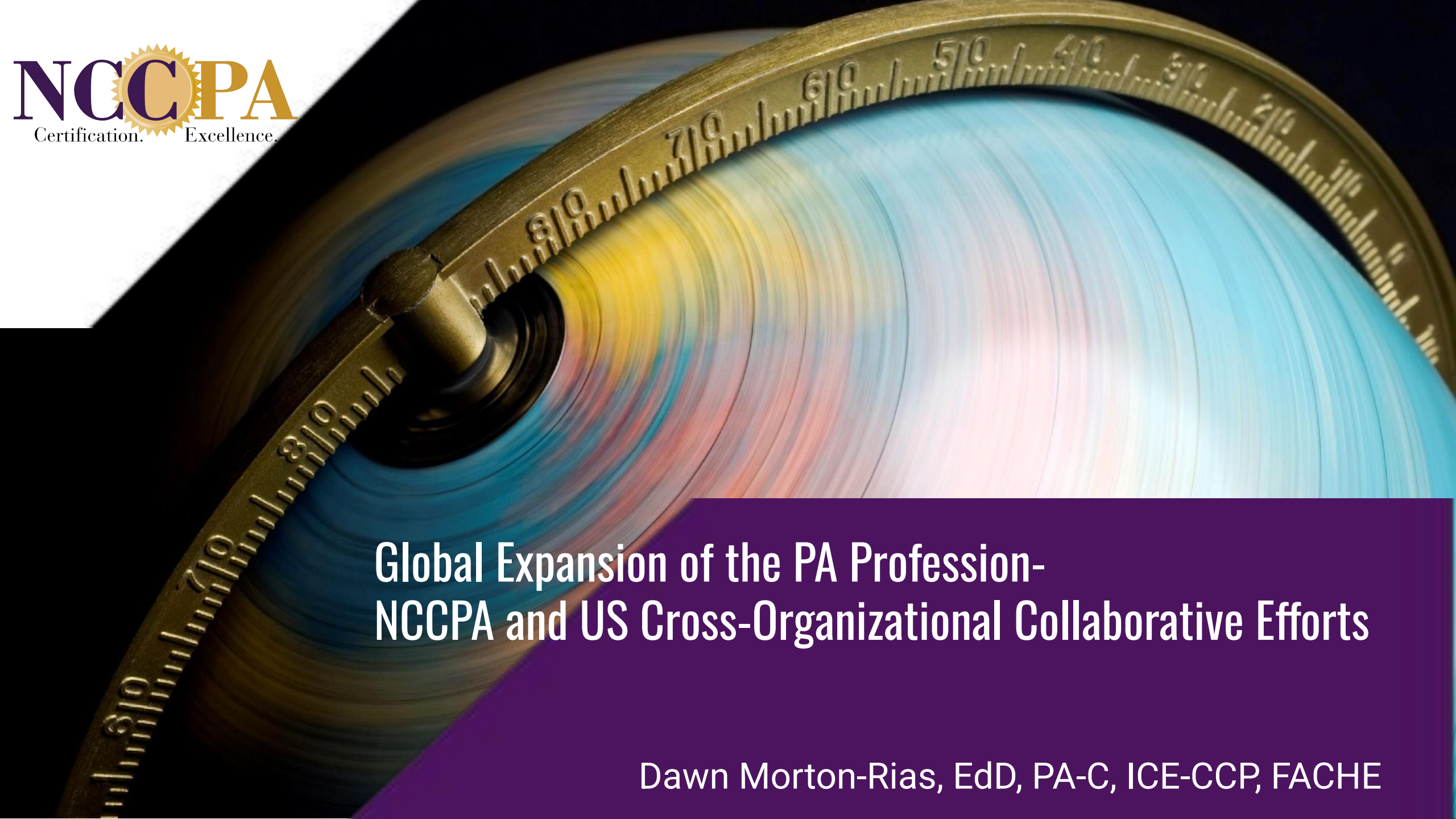

Global Expansion of the PA Profession- NCCPA and US Cross-Organizational Collaborative Efforts

Dawn Morton-Rias, EdD, PA-C, ICE-CCP, FACHE

Learning Objectives

During this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the evolving global landscape of the PA/PA comparable professions.
2. Describe the current requirements for PA licensure and certification in the US.
3. Discuss current efforts among the NCCPA and the sister US PA Cross-Organizations regarding the global PA landscape.
4. Explore emerging issues related to the globalization of the PA profession.

NCCPA's "Why" for International Engagement

- PAs/PA comparable clinicians are important partners in healthcare, who have a tremendous role and impact in helping to address healthcare needs.

- NCCPA is committed to supporting the PA profession and raising awareness of the profession in the U.S. and internationally.

- We understand and appreciate that each country has a unique approach to how PAs/ PA comparable clinicians are utilized.

- NCCPA's approach in working with other countries has been to
  - share information from lessons learned over the past 50 years
  - provide data on the U.S. PA profession
  - provide opportunities for dialogue.

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NCCPA's International Engagement

Over the years, NCCPA has had the opportunity to visit a number of countries and participate in a variety of international conferences.

- Australia
- Canada
- China
- England
- Germany
- India
- Indonesia
- Ireland
- Israel
- New Zealand
- Rwanda
- Scotland
- South Africa
- Spain
- The Netherlands
- United Arab Emirates

- Canadian Association of PAs
- Euro PA Conference
- Global Association of Clinical Officers and PAs (GACOPA)
- International Academy of PA Educators (IAPAE)
- International Academy of PAs (IAPA)
- International Association for Health Professionals Education (AMEE)
- International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities (IAMRA)
- International Association of Medical Science Educators (IAMSE)
- International Association of Test Publishers (IATP)
- International Health Workforce Collaborative (IHWC)
- International PA Conference in India
- The Netherlands International Conference
- World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practioners/Family Practice (WONCA)

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Highlights of NCCPA's International Initiatives

2006

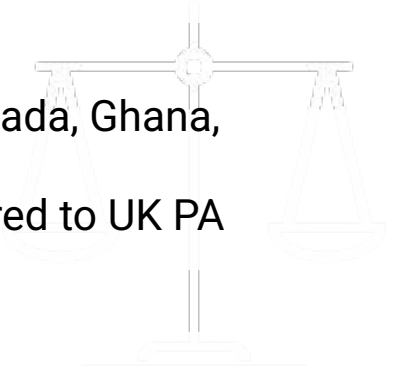
- International engagement began through providing guidance/support to Canada in developing a national certification exam.

2008

- Increased efforts in monitoring the international development of the PA profession, responding to invitations to visit countries to share "lessons learned," and attending/ presenting at PA and other healthcare related international conferences.

2010

- Hosted an international meeting at its headquarters with attendees from Australia, Canada, Ghana, England, Ireland, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S.
- Collaborated with the UK to pilot NCCPA-derived questions on assessments administered to UK PA students at the end of their program of study.



2011

- Collaborated with Australia to pilot NCCPA-derived questions on assessments administered to PA students at the end of their program of study in Australia.

2013

- NCCPA Board of Directors seated a Board workgroup to facilitate discussion on NCCPA's international engagement interests and priorities.
- As requested, NCCPA staff conducted an item writing workshop for PA educators in South Africa.

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Highlights of NCCPA's International Initiatives

2017

- Hosted a delegation from the UK, interested in learning more about the PA profession and regulation of PAs in the U.S.

2019

- As requested, NCCPA staff conducted an item writing and item review meeting for the Royal College of Surgeons-Ireland to develop items for their national exam.
- Hosted delegates from Saudi Arabia to conduct an item-writing workshop on automated item generation techniques.

2020

- Provided financial and presentation support for the GACOPA Conference in Rwanda.

2022

- Hosted a delegation from South Korea in Atlanta, interested in learning more about the PA Profession in the U.S.

2023

- Reactivated its Board work group to monitor the international landscape and address any topics of international engagement and interest.

2025

- Hosted the 2025 International PA Summit sponsored by the four national U.S. PA organizations.

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The Global PA Landscape

The PA and PA Analogue education has existed in Africa since 1896 when Malawi first started training an alternate healthcare cadre titled medical dresser to support the burgeoning healthcare system. Today, there are more than 20 countries in **Africa** with PA and PA Analogue health professionals.
https://www.iapae.org/about/.(Right- GACOPA 2020)

Today, there are more than seventeen different PA and PA analogue education qualifications in sixteen countries in **Asia.** https://www.iapae.org/about/

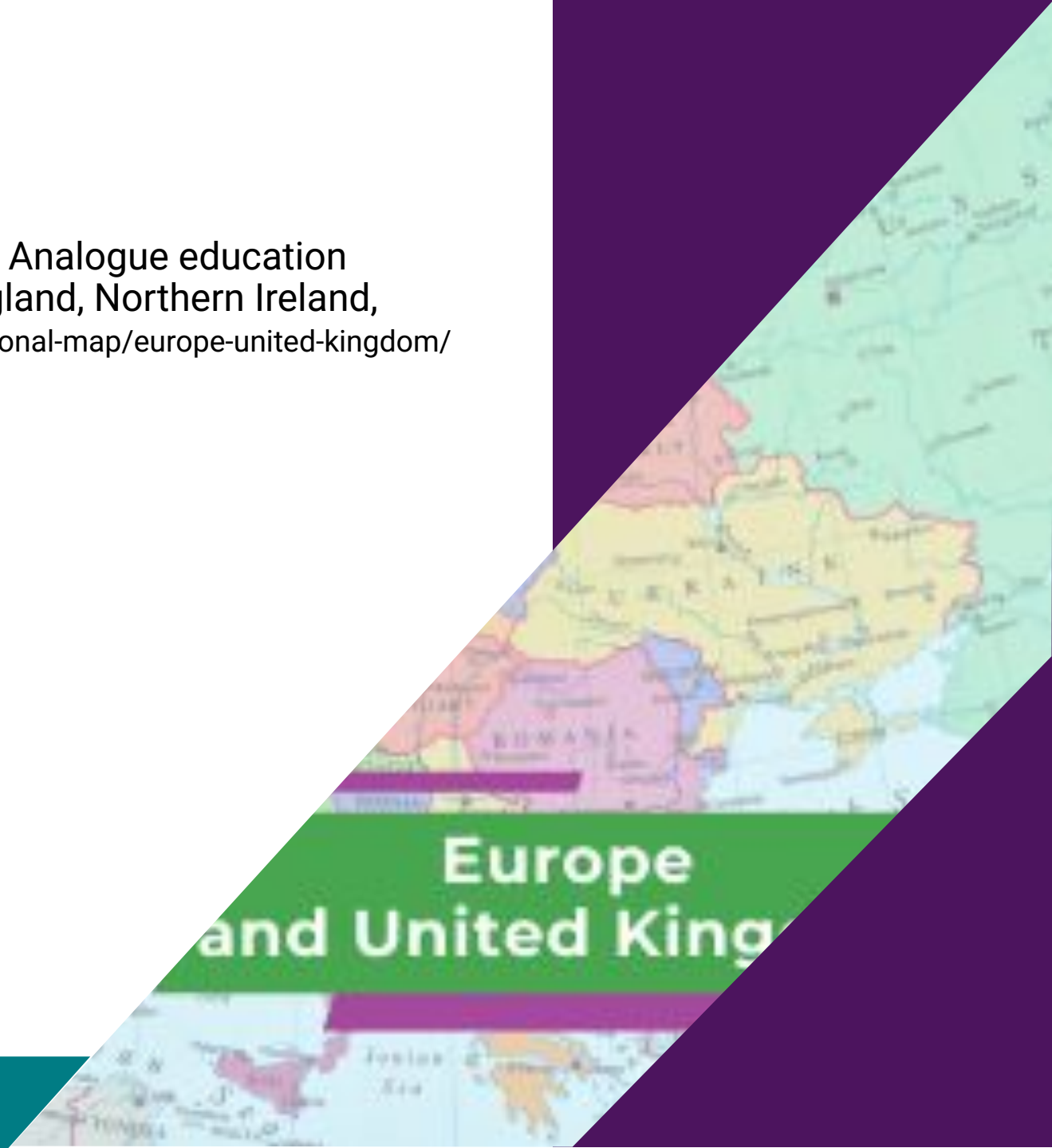
(Below- 20th anniversary of the PA profession in India 2018)

Europe and the UK

The **United Kingdom** has more than 40 PA/PA Analogue education programs training physician associates in England, Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland. https://www.iapae.org/international-map/europe-united-kingdom/

The Profession is also established in

- Germany
- The Netherlands
- Ireland
- Isreal
- Bulgaria
- Poland
- Switzerland
- Ukraine



North America

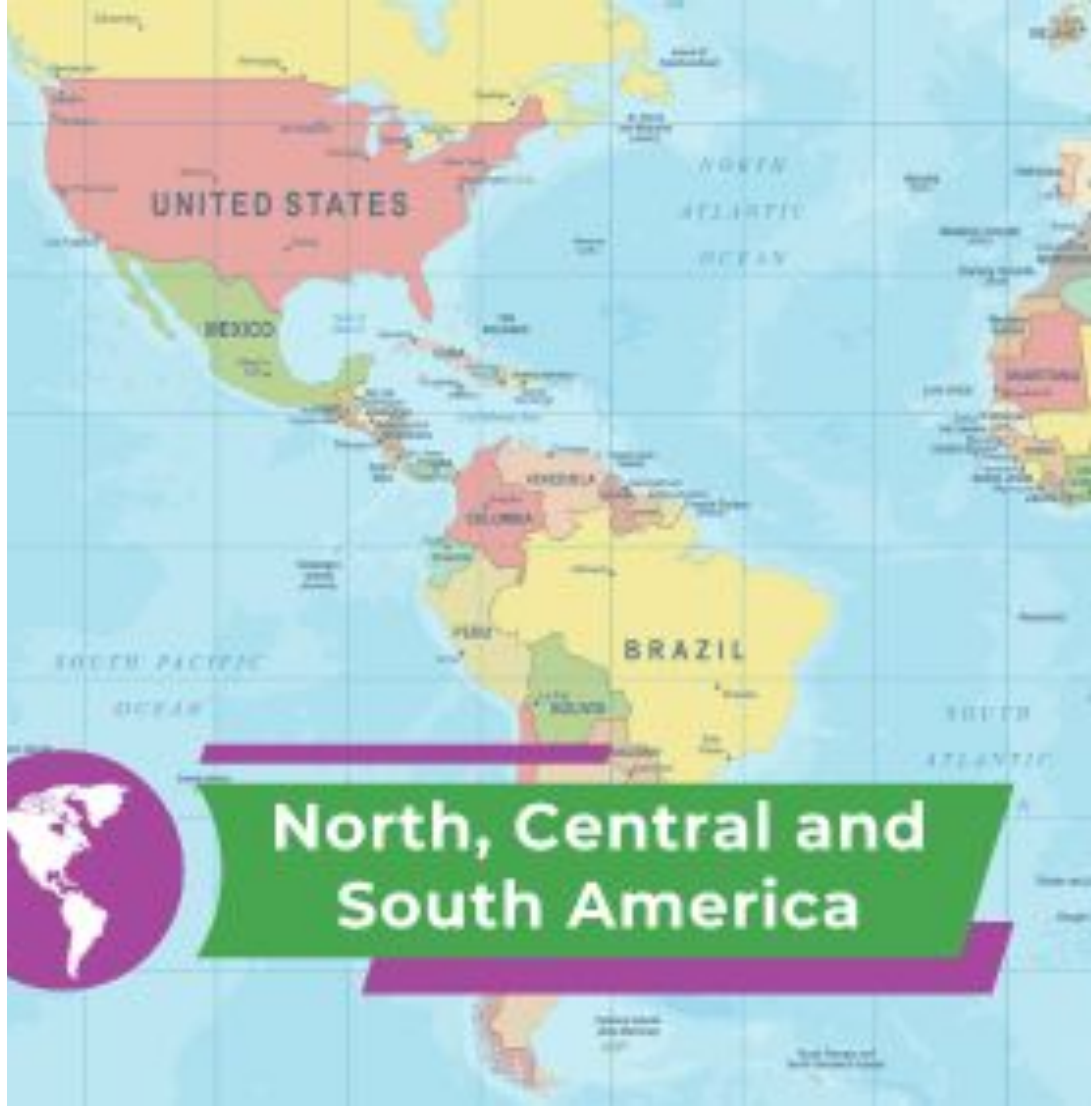
317 ARC-PA-accredited PA Programs in the US

40+ in development

Canada has PAs who are educated and provide medical care in most of the ten provinces, including the Canadian Armed Forces.

https://www.iapae.org/international-map/north-central-and-south-america/

Data on the PA profession in Central and South America is unconfirmed



We are a global academy of Physician Associate and PA Analogue Educators

IAPAE Conference 2024 https://www.iapae.org/about/

2025 International PA Summit

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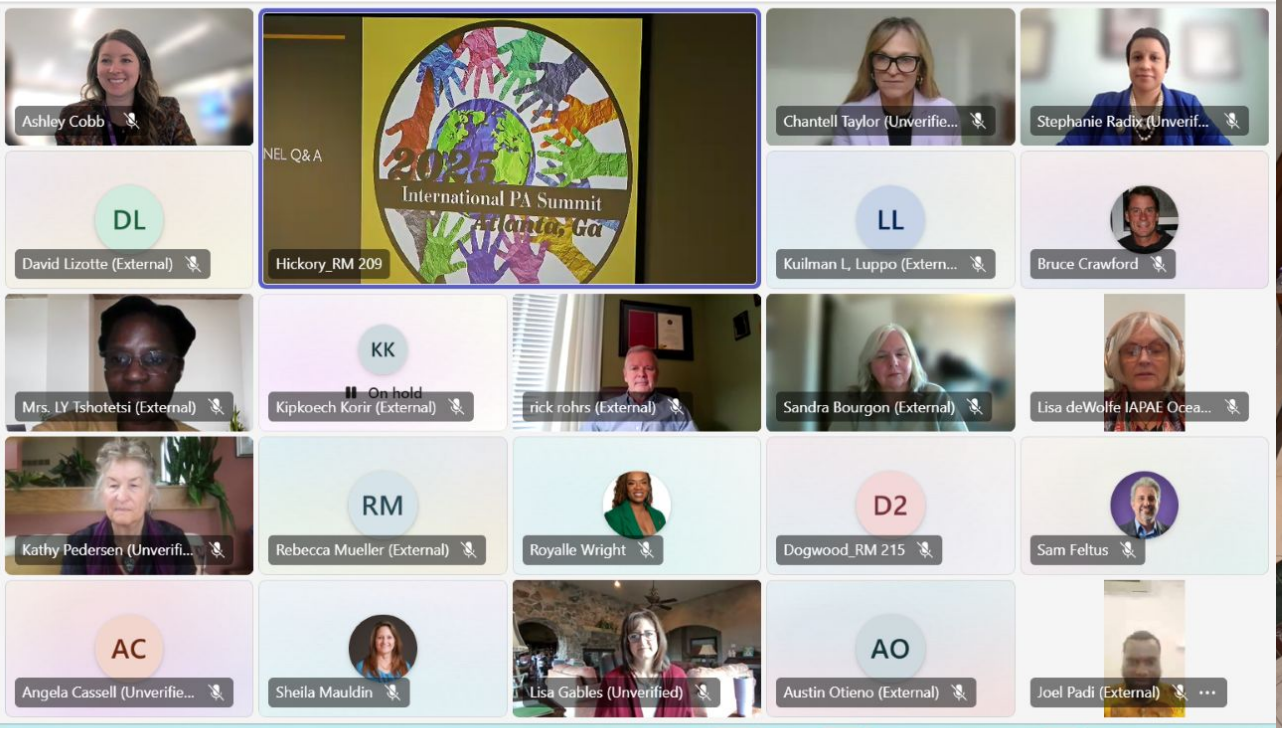
56 participants from 13 countries



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Key Talking Point from the Summit

A group of thought leaders from around the world came together to discuss and increase awareness of the international landscape of the PA/PA equivalent professions. We had great discussions on education, learned from one another, and had a very informed and thoughtful conversation about future possibilities.

Participants agreed in the value of convening global leaders of the profession to discuss topics that are of particular interest to the profession.

https://www.nccpa.net/news/international-gathering-for-pa-profession/

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Key Points from NCCPA's International Environment Scanning Efforts

- PAs/PA comparable providers are vital contributors to the global healthcare workforce, and the profession continues to expand within countries where it already exists and to develop in additional areas.
- Interest in global mobility continues to increase among healthcare professionals, including PAs.
- In some countries where there are multiple educational programs, there is a lack of consistency in the educational experiences for students.
- Some countries continue to face challenges with the formal recognition or credentialing of the profession.

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Key Points from NCCPA's International Environment Scanning Efforts

- The scope of practice and how PAs/PA-comparable professionals are utilized varies from country to country.
- In some countries, PAs face challenges that prevent them from practicing at their highest potential (acceptance of the profession, pushback from physicians, understanding of the role, etc.).
- We appreciate the work that is being done to map PA curricula.
- Currently, a centralized "data center" does not exist for the international PA/PA comparable workforce.

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Key Points from NCCPA's Environment Scanning of US Efforts:

State Efforts Regarding Physicians

To meet growing healthcare needs, some states have:

- Developed alternative pathways to licensure of internationally educated physicians
- Licensed internationally educated physicians as PAs

Growing interest among organizations such as ECFMG and Tru Merit (formerly GCFNS)

- To engage in new ventures to offer visa screening and credentials evaluation services for internationally educated PAs

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Core Requirements PA Licensure in the US

1. Graduation from an Accredited Program:

Complete a Physician Assistant program accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA).

2. Pass the PANCE:

Successfully pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE), which is administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

3. State-Specific Requirements:

Apply for a license with the medical board of the chosen state, which may include background checks, fingerprinting, and payment of fees.

In addition to visa screening and clearance

Considerations

- There is interest among some international PAs to practice in the US. To date, there is no process short of enrolling in a US-based, ARC-PA-accredited PA program
- What are the ethical considerations of creating a pathway for international PAs to practice in the US? Contribution to in-country *brain drain*.
- A pilot project is under consideration for the ARC-PA to offer accreditation services to four preliminarily-interested international PA Programs.
- Has the time come for the PA Profession in the US and the national PA organizations to develop strategies to facilitate engagement with the international PA community?

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Questions?

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