

# Physician Assistants - Part of Beacon's Backbone

By Katie Ford Hall  
Cincinnati Woman Magazine

Beacon Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine is one of the area's largest orthopedic facilities, offering a comprehensive menu of services. Their website lists their specialties as "in Orthopaedic Surgery, total joint replacement, Arthroscopic procedures, and Sports Medicine." Among the doctors on their staff is Timothy E. Kremchek M.D., well-known in his field and as Medical Director of the Cincinnati Reds. They offer surgical and MRI centers in both their offices, conveniently located on the east and west side of town. They list their highest priorities as "customer satisfaction and education" and their website provides links and videos to educate patients. By offering such comprehensive services through Board Certified and Fellowship Trained physicians, patients can reap the benefits of reduced stress and the increased efficiency of "one stop shopping." Offering a personal touch, they take the time to identify the needs of the patient and tailor treatments to help them meet their goals, whether those goals are returning to competitive sports or comfortably walking the golf course. At the Beacon offices, a person can be diagnosed through examination and MRI; receive the operation, if needed; and follow up through rehabilitation.

## What Are PAs?

In order to assist with meeting the company goals, Beacon uses PAs, or Physician Assistants. According to the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA; [www.aapa.org](http://www.aapa.org)), "Physician assistants are health care professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. As part of their comprehensive responsibilities, PAs conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery, and write prescriptions. Within the physician-PA relationship, physician assistants exercise autonomy in medical decision making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services."

"PAs are educated in the medical model designed to complement physician training. Upon graduation, physician assistants take a national certification examination developed by the National Commission on Certification of PAs in conjunction with the National Board of Medical Examiners. To maintain their national certification, PAs must log 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years and sit for a recertification every six



Beacon's Physician Assistants are, from the left, Joe Ehrhard PA-C (seated), Matt Milam PA-C, Sarah Snyder PA-C, Angie Kist PA-C (seated), Mark Thiemann PA-C, and Megan Rauchenstein PA-C (seated). Not in attendance at the photo shoot, but pictured inset left, is Shannon Urton, PA-C for Dr. Robert Burger (sports medicine and orthopaedic surgeon).

years. Graduation from an accredited physician assistant program and passage of the national certifying exam are required for state licensure."

## Who Are PAs?

In Ohio, a PA is defined as "a skilled person qualified by academic and clinical training to provide services to patients as a physician assistant under the supervision, control, and direction of one or more physicians who are responsible for the physician assistant's performance." (<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/4730.01>)

The AAPA has recently released updated census data regarding the profession. Below is a summary of some of their findings:

- Nationally, 64% of PAs are female
- The median income for PAs employed full time Nationally is \$82,223
- The median income for PAs employed full time in Ohio is \$76,736
- 29% of PAs in Ohio hold Masters Degrees from a PA school
- The median age of a PA in Ohio is 40

Additionally, Ohio has recently changed its laws to allow PAs to prescribe medication. Beginning October 31, 2007, PAs may apply