

Israel Physician Assistants

Author Profiles:

Roi Ozer, MBA, EMT-P, PA-C, has experience working as a paramedic for the Israeli EMS, International Red Cross (ICRC) and urgent medical centers. He was also a medical simulation instructor has earned an MBA and is a graduate of the first Israeli Ministry of Health course for physician assistants (PA) in 2016. He currently works as a PA in the department of emergency medicine at the Sheba Medical Center in Israel, the largest medical center in Israel. Roi.Ozer@sheba.health.gov.il



Dr. Oren Berkowitz, PhD, PA-C, arrived in Israel in 2017 at the start of its development of Physician Assistants. He was involved in a consulting role with the Ministry of Health for several years and now he hopes to help advance the new healthcare position through research and education. Dr. Berkowitz is the former Director of Research and co-founder of the Boston University School of Medicine Physician Assistant Program. He is an epidemiologist and a PA. Dr. Berkowitz is currently a Senior Lecturer faculty member in the Dept. of Health Systems Management at Ariel University. He practiced for many years as a PA in neurosurgery. He is involved in global PA scholarship. Oren Berkowitz's website: <http://www.drorenberkowitz.com/>.



General Information:

The profession began in Israel in 2016 when the Ministry of Health began training veteran paramedics to work in emergency medicine, following the recommendations of the Israeli MOH Physician Assistant Committee, published during July 2013. In the first cohort, 33 students graduated, and an additional 30 students graduated in 2018. A third course was planned to begin in 2020 but has been postponed due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, during mid-March 2020.



Entry Criteria:

There are three entry pathways to enter the PA program in Israel. One option includes paramedics with five years of clinical experience and a bachelor's degree. The second is for PAs who have already been trained abroad and seek additional training in emergency medicine. And finally, graduate medical doctors who did not pass the Israeli MD licensing exam or are awaiting the exam can apply to the program. There is no entrance exam required for entry.

Education:

Currently there is one PA training program in Israel approved and sponsored by the Ministry of Health. The focus of this program is for paramedics to receive additional training and then continue to work in an emergency medicine setting. Included in the one-year training course is didactic content combined with hands-on clinical training in emergency departments throughout Israel. Another training program is held for almost a decade by Terem Urgent Care Centers, a private company, for PAs in urgent community care, but has not yet been approved or authorized by the Israeli Ministry of Health.

There are approximately 30 graduates in each cohort that are awarded a diploma and certificate of completion.

Financing Education

The Israeli MOH regulates and finances the PA program.

Accrediting/Regulatory Bodies:

The profession is regulated by the Israeli MOH and does not have an accreditation structure. There is no cooperation between the MOH, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labor at this time.

The Israeli Physician Assistant Association

The Israeli Physician Assistant Association (IPAA) was established and legally registered during 2019. The association works to promote and advance the PA profession in Israel, by means of negotiation and liaison with Israeli MOH, government, medical institutions and other stakeholders. It maintains a Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/ipaa2016>.



The First Annual Conference on Physician Assistants in Israel

The First Annual Conference on Physician Assistants in Israel was held in the Sheba Medical Center, on April 4, 2019. The conference dealt with PA workforce development in Israel, strategic planning, research and future vision.



Professional Licensure:

PAs are licensed by the MOH after graduation when they receive a registration number. There is a searchable database to find providers at

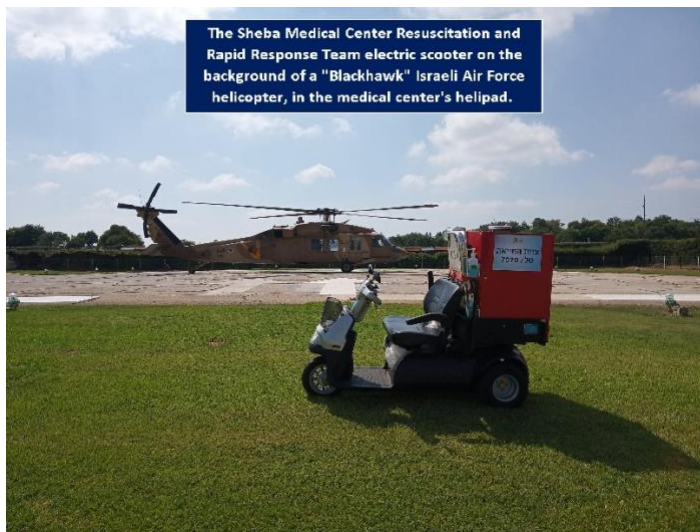
<https://www.health.gov.il/English/MinistryUnits/HR/Profession/Pages/default.aspx>

but this does not yet include PAs. In addition to the educational programs sponsored by the MOH, the organization also created and administers the PA Certification Exam.



Scope of Practice:

The scope of practice for PAs in Israel includes: performing a history and physical exam, ordering diagnostic labs and imaging, ordering consults, assisting in treatment of critical patients in trauma rooms, escorting critical patients in hospital, participating in department journal clubs and other educational activities and serving on Rapid Response and Resuscitation teams in the Sheba Medical Center. In addition, they are authorized to administer medication in emergency situations mainly during RRT situations and in trauma rooms. They are currently not authorized to administer or prescribe medication in non-emergent settings. In some hospitals, PAs prepare the medication orders and prescriptions for the physician to sign or co-sign. Procedural skills performed by PAs include: suturing, placement and removal of casts, incision and drainage, intubation (only PAs who are also paramedics), insertion of nasogastric tubes and foley catheters, etc. Currently, the main roadblock that remains in the scope of practice is medication ordering and prescribing.



Maintaining Role:

Currently there are no continuing education requirements to maintain licensure.

Job Opportunities:

In terms of employment, emergency departments throughout Israel provide employment opportunities for PAs depending on local needs, budget, management and funding. Currently 70 PAs work in Israel in almost all emergency departments treating adult and pediatric patients.

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