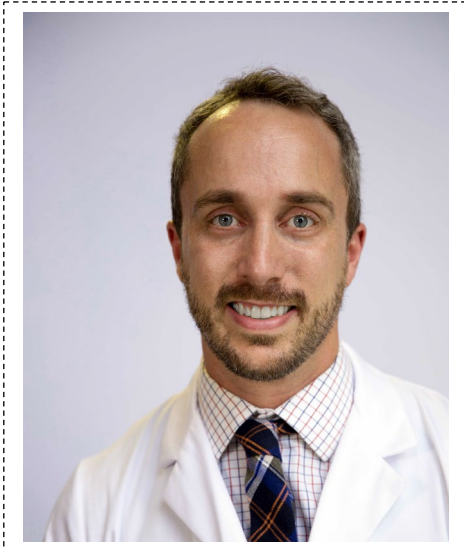




## Student of Medicine

Annan Sheffield, PA-S, UW School of Medicine



### Place of Study

Spokane, WA

### Institution

University of Washington School of Medicine

### Type of Degree

PA-S

### Typical Day

Typical day would be spent seeing patients in the chosen field of medicine, which could be seeing people as a family practice PA, working as an emergency room PA, or being the first assist in the operating room as a general surgery PA. The day also would involve some form of medical documentation work as well as interpreting test results.

### What I Love About My Program/Future Field of Medicine

I love that when I am done with school I will be able to start interacting with and treating patients in the field of medicine of my choosing. I also like the fact that at anytime I can choose a different field so long as I find a physician to enter into a partnership with.

### Career Pathway

I knew I wanted to do something medical during high school and thought that that would be in medical school. After college, I lived abroad really thinking about what I wanted to do and when I got back received my Masters in Public Health focusing on epidemiology. Through my masters I realized I really wanted to work with people and during the time I was doing a job that involved a lot of social work. My medical supervisor approached me and the possibility of going to Physician Assistant school and as I had a family I thought the amount of schooling was the right fit for the job I got to do when I was finished.

## Most Important Skills Needed

- **Communication** – Empathy! You need to have empathy and understanding in order to develop a therapeutic relationship with your patients. Also interprofessional communication as you will be part of a team treating an individual sometimes this means in quick and concise ways.
- **Problem Solving** – the ability to interpret physical exams, test results, patient complaints and put together the most likely diagnosis. Also the ability to problem solve the psychosocial aspects of your patients life and how that is affecting their health.
- **Adaptability**- Every patient's need is different and they all come from diverse backgrounds that you may not fully grasp. It's important to be able to adapt and understand how to work with every patient that comes through your door.

## Science and Engineering Practices I Use

- Understanding what the different signs and symptoms mean when a patient discusses them with you.
- Math- While many things are computerized there are many times when you have to do weight conversions, dosing problems and estimations during a visit with a patient.
- Biology, physiology and anatomy- Knowing and understanding how our bodies respond to certain things is important especially on a cellular level. Knowing also the anatomy and how each organ system interacts is a skill used every minute on the job.
- Psychology/sociology- Understanding that it is not only things in our body that affect an individuals health but also how a persons living environment and social system also play a big role in health. Also understanding how people think is important

## Technology and Equipment I Use

- Computers – Lots of physician assistants use laptops, but practices might also have desktops to use.
- Medical equipment- It's a long list and it depends on where you work but most physician assistants use blood pressure cuffs, stethoscopes, ophthalmoscopes, thermometers, and heart monitors to name the basics, but some may operate more complicated equipment.

## Education Background Needed

Bachelor's degree from a four-year college.

After graduation you need to start gaining patient care experiences as most programs require at least a minimum of 500 hours before you can apply. This can be done as a CNA, nurse, MA, EMT and other ways too. Some programs require the GRA but not all and the basic pre-requisite courses are, biology, chemistry, English, and psychology. Some programs require other courses in addition.