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LOCAL PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT RECEIVES SPECIALTY CREDENTIAL

Johns Creek, GA, Jan.15, 2014 – Jeremy Houtakker, a physician assistant at Mercy Walworth Hospital and Medical Center, is one of only 108 certified physician assistants (PA-Cs) nationally to recently earn a specialty credential called a Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) from the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

Houtakker was awarded a CAQ in Orthopaedic Surgery, a distinction earned by meeting licensure, education and experience requirements and then passing an exam in the specialty. He is one of only 16 certified PAs in Wisconsin and 530 certified PAs nationally, to earn a CAQ since the program's inception in 2011.

“The demand for certified PAs in the era of health care reform is skyrocketing,” says NCCPA Board Chairman James Cannon, D.H.A., PA-C, himself a recipient of the CAQ in psychiatry. “The CAQ validates, in an objective way, a certified PA’s understanding and experience in a specialty area. It is good news for the public as these PAs are doing over and above what is required for state licensure by earning this valuable credential. It is also good news for physician specialists who are likely to appreciate PAs who go the extra mile to expand their skills, adding value to the practice with a clinician who holds both primary care and specialty certificates.”

CAQs were offered to certified PAs in cardiovascular and thoracic surgery, emergency medicine, orthopaedic surgery, nephrology and psychiatry. This year, NCCPA will add hospital medicine and pediatrics to the CAQ program.

Certified PAs are licensed and certified health care professionals who practice medicine with physician supervision and bring a breadth of knowledge and skills to patient care. Though their role in any particular workplace is determined in consultation with the supervising physician, certified PAs can take histories, conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventative health care, assist in surgery, perform a variety of procedures and write prescriptions.

For more information about certified PAs or the CAQ program, visit www.nccpa.net.

About the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants

The [National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants \(NCCPA\)](http://www.nccpa.net) is the only certifying organization for physician assistants (PAs) in the United States. The PA-C credential is awarded by NCCPA to PAs who fulfill certification, certification maintenance and recertification requirements. There are approximately 92,000 certified PAs in the U.S. today. In 2011, NCCPA launched its [Certificate of Added Qualifications \(CAQ\)](#) program for certified physician assistants practicing in Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery, Emergency Medicine, Nephrology, Orthopaedic Surgery and Psychiatry; two new specialties (Pediatrics and Hospital Medicine) are being added in 2014. For more information, please call (678) 417-8100 or visit www.NCCPA.net.

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