PARTNER PROGRAM GUIDE · 2027 EDITION

The ComPAss Award™ for PAs

Everything your team needs to launch and run a patient-nominated recognition program for your PAs: physician assistants and physician associates.



thecompassaward.com · info@thecompassaward.com
Created by practicing PAs. An independent recognition program.

1 · WELCOME

Live in 30 days, then about 2 to 4 hours a month

The ComPAss Award honors PAs who deliver extraordinary, compassionate care. Patients, families and colleagues nominate; your team chooses; and everyone celebrates on the unit.

What we provide

- Your organization's own online nomination page, with QR-code posters and table tents
- Paper nomination forms for patients who prefer them
- The scoring rubric, ceremony script and every template in this guide
- Honoree kits included in your yearly package (ComPAss lapel pin, framed certificate, printed nomination), with extra kits available
- A listing for each honoree on the national ComPAss honoree wall
- The ComPAss Partner badge for your careers and PA recruiting pages
- A program contact who answers questions and checks in each quarter

What we ask of you

- Name an executive sponsor and a program coordinator
- Choose honorees on merit, through a committee, from real nominations
- Present each award in person, in front of the honoree's team
- Register each honoree with us within two weeks of the ceremony
- Keep the program running for the full partnership year

Contents: 1 Welcome · 2 Roles · 3 Launch plan · 4 Program rules · 5 Collecting nominations · 6 Selecting honorees · 7 The celebration · 8 After the ceremony · 9 Funding · 10 Templates · 11 FAQ and support

2 · ROLES

Three roles run the program

Most organizations fill them with existing APP leaders and a few staff PAs.

Role	Usually held by	Responsibilities	Time
Executive sponsor	Chief APP Officer, APP director, CMO or CNO	Champions the program, signs certificates, attends ceremonies when possible	1–2 hours a quarter
Program coordinator	APP manager, lead PA or APP office administrator	Owns the nomination inbox, prepares blinded nominations, schedules the committee and ceremonies, orders kits, registers honorees	2–4 hours a month
Selection committee (5–7)	Staff PAs from different services, an NP or physician colleague, a patient experience leader, ideally a patient or family advisor	Reads and scores nominations, picks honorees, keeps deliberations confidential	1–2 hours per round

Committee tips

- Include PAs from inpatient, outpatient and procedural areas so no single unit dominates.
- Rotate one or two members each year.
- A member nominated in a given round sits out that round's scoring.
- Past honorees make excellent committee members.

3 · LAUNCH PLAN

Thirty days to open nominations

Open nominations by day 30 and hold your first ceremony about 60 days after signing.

Week 1: Set up

- [ ] Name the executive sponsor and coordinator; send both names to ComPAss
- [ ] Read your welcome email and setup checklist
- [ ] Decide eligibility and award cadence
- [ ] Ask communications for one point person

Week 2: Committee and privacy

- [ ] Invite 5–7 committee members
- [ ] Send the nomination form to your privacy or compliance officer
- [ ] Confirm who receives nominations and where they're stored
- [ ] Choose a funding source if sponsored

Week 3: Materials

- [ ] Approve your nomination page (we build it)
- [ ] Print QR posters and table tents
- [ ] Print paper forms; set up a collection box
- [ ] Add the Partner badge to your careers or APP page

Week 4: Launch

- [ ] Send the staff announcement (template 2)
- [ ] Brief unit leaders at huddles or staff meetings
- [ ] Post on the intranet and social channels
- [ ] Place posters; nominations are now open

Days 31–60: First award

- [ ] Collect nominations for at least four weeks
- [ ] Hold the first selection meeting
- [ ] Plan and hold the first surprise ceremony
- [ ] Register the honoree with ComPAss and share the story

4 · PROGRAM RULES

Any practicing PA can be honored

Your committee picks honorees on the strength of the nomination story. Within these rules, you set the details.

Who is eligible

- Licensed, practicing PAs employed by or credentialed at your organization, full or part time, in any specialty or setting
- PAs in leadership roles who still see patients
- Not eligible: PAs serving on the selection committee, and anyone honored in the past 12 months

How often, and how many

Organization size	Suggested cadence	Honorees a year
Fewer than 25 PAs	Twice a year	2
25 to 99 PAs	Quarterly	4–6
100+ PAs or several sites	Monthly or quarterly per site	8–12+

Nominees who are not selected

Every nominee receives a short thank-you note and a copy of their nomination (template 3), so each one sees the difference they made.

5 · COLLECTING NOMINATIONS

Make nominating take under five minutes

Who can nominate: patients, family members, visitors and any colleague. Nominations stay open all year; each round reviews everything received since the last.

Three ways in

1. **Online:** your ComPAss nomination page, by QR code or link
2. **Paper:** forms in waiting areas, dropped in a box or sent to the coordinator
3. **Letters and emails:** thank-you notes praising a PA can become nominations, with the writer's permission

Where to put QR posters

Patient rooms and discharge folders; clinic and ED waiting areas; family lounges; staff break rooms for colleague nominations.

Privacy. Nominations often describe a patient's care, so treat them as confidential. Store them where only the coordinator and committee can see them. Respect the nominator's choice about sharing. Remove patient-identifying details before sharing any story outside your organization, and follow your privacy office's guidance.

6 · SELECTING HONOREES

Score blinded nominations on the four points of the compass

One selection round takes about an hour.

1. **Prepare (coordinator, one week before).** Remove the PA's name, unit and the nominator's name; number each nomination; send to the committee.
2. **Score alone.** Each member scores every nomination with the rubric.
3. **Meet (45–60 minutes).** Total the scores, discuss the top three, choose the honoree. Break ties by asking which story would mean the most read aloud on the unit.
4. **Unblind and check.** Confirm eligibility and good standing with the manager, without saying why.
5. **Keep it secret.** The ceremony is a surprise.

The ComPAss rubric

Point	Value	What a 5 looks like	Score	Weight
N	Compassion	Went beyond expectations to comfort a patient or family; they felt truly seen	1–5	×2
E	Clinical excellence	Sound judgment that ensured excellence of care	1–5	×1
S	Communication	Explained clearly, listened, helped people make hard decisions	1–5	×1
W	Teamwork	Lifted the team through teaching, support or advocacy	1–5	×1

Maximum score is 30. A nomination doesn't need to touch all four points; one powerful story of compassion can win.

Fairness checks

- Spread awards across units and settings over the year.
- Members disclose close working relationships with a nominee and skip that score.
- Keep a simple log of each round: date, number of nominations, honoree.

7 · THE CELEBRATION

A surprise on the unit, with the team around them

The ceremony takes 10 to 15 minutes. Reading the nomination aloud is the heart of it.

Planning checklist

- [ ] Pick a date with the honoree's manager, who keeps the secret and makes sure they're working
- [ ] Invite the sponsor, the nominator if willing, and colleagues; consider family
- [ ] Bring the kit: pin, certificate and a printed nomination
- [ ] Arrange a shared treat for the team
- [ ] Arrange photos, and get the honoree's consent before sharing them outside the unit

Ceremony script

1. **Gather (2 min).** The manager brings the honoree to a central spot with a believable reason.
2. **Welcome (1 min).**

   > *"We're here because someone wanted to say thank you. The ComPAss Award honors PAs whose care points patients and families in the right direction when they need it most. Today, we're honoring one of your own."*

3. **Read the nomination (3–5 min).** Read it in full, as written. If the nominator is present, invite them to read it.
4. **Present the award (2 min).** Pin the honoree and present the certificate.

   > *"[Name], on behalf of [Organization] and the ComPAss Award, thank you for the extraordinary care you give every day."*

5. **Invite a few words (optional).** Many honorees prefer not to speak.
6. **Celebrate (5 min).** Photos, the treat, and congratulations.

Keep it short so clinical work continues, hold it in the care area, and have tissues on hand.

8 · AFTER THE CEREMONY

Register, thank, share, repeat

Within two weeks

- [ ] Register the honoree with ComPAss: name, credentials, unit, ceremony date, photo and nomination text (with consent)
- [ ] Send thank-you notes and nomination copies to nominees not selected
- [ ] Thank the nominator and let them know their story was read aloud
- [ ] Share the story internally or on social media, if the honoree and nominator agreed

Every round

Step	Who	When
Send blinded nominations to committee	Coordinator	1 week before the meeting
Selection meeting	Committee	Same week each round
Ceremony	Sponsor, manager, coordinator	Within 3 weeks of selection
Register honoree; thank nominees	Coordinator	Within 2 weeks of the ceremony
Reorder kits if fewer than 2 remain	Coordinator	As needed

Keep nominations flowing

- Refresh posters every six months.
- Mention the award at staff meetings after each ceremony.
- Feature honorees during National PA Week each October.

9 · FUNDING

Ways partners pay for the program

- APP, medical staff or patient experience budget
- Hospital foundation or employee recognition fund
- A local business or civic group sponsoring one award a year
- PA programs that send students to your organization for rotations

Sponsors to avoid: drug and medical device manufacturers. PAs are covered recipients under the federal Open Payments program, so gifts to named PAs funded by these companies may have to be reported. Check with your compliance office before accepting any sponsor. Sponsors never take part in choosing honorees.

10 · TEMPLATES

Copy, fill in the brackets, and send

Template 1: Nomination form

Thank a PA who made a difference. PAs (physician assistants, also called physician associates) are licensed clinicians who diagnose, treat and care for patients. Tell us about a PA whose care you'll never forget.

Field	Required
PA's name (or a description if you don't know it)	Yes
Unit, clinic or service, and approximate date	Yes
Your story: what did this PA do, and why did it matter?	Yes
Your relationship: patient, family member, visitor, colleague	Yes
Your name, email and phone, so we can thank you	Optional
May we read your story at the ceremony? Yes / No	Yes
May we share your story publicly, without your name or health details? Yes / No	Yes

Template 2: Staff announcement

Subject: Introducing the ComPAss Award for our PAs

Team,

We're proud to launch the ComPAss Award at [Organization], a program that honors PAs who deliver extraordinary, compassionate care.

Patients, families and colleagues can nominate any PA using the QR codes now posted across our units, or at [NOMINATION LINK]. Our committee will choose honorees [quarterly], and we'll celebrate each one right on their unit.

If a PA has made a difference for you or your patients, please take five minutes to share the story.

[Executive sponsor name, title]

Template 3: Thank-you note to nominees not selected

Dear [Name],

You were nominated for the ComPAss Award by [a patient / a family member / a colleague]. A copy of the nomination is enclosed. The committee read every word, and we wanted you to see the difference you made.

Thank you for the care you give every day.

[Executive sponsor name, title]

Template 4: Press release

[Organization] honors [PA name], PA-C, with the ComPAss Award

[City, State], [Date]: [Organization] presented [PA name], PA-C, a [physician assistant / physician associate] in [service], with the ComPAss Award, which recognizes PAs who deliver extraordinary, compassionate care.

[Name] was nominated by [a patient / a family / a colleague], who wrote that [one or two sentences, with permission and without health details].

"[Quote from the executive sponsor.]"

[Organization] is a ComPAss Award partner. Learn more at thecompassaward.com.

Media contact: [Name, email, phone]

11 · FAQ AND SUPPORT

Questions partners ask

What if we get very few nominations? Move posters to waiting areas and discharge paperwork, mention the award in huddles, and invite colleague nominations. If a round has no strong nomination, skip it rather than lower the bar.

Can NPs, nurses or physicians be nominated? The ComPAss Award is for PAs. Nurses and advanced practice nurses have their own established awards; many partners run the ComPAss Award alongside them.

Can a PA be honored more than once? Yes, but not within 12 months of a previous award.

What if an honoree has a performance concern? The coordinator's check with the manager is there for this. Choose the next-highest nomination and keep the reason confidential.

How do we order more kits? Email us. Extra kits beyond your package are $175 each ($160 for Large partners).

We're a health system with several hospitals. Is there system pricing? Yes. Each hospital is priced by its own size, with a discount when 5 or more sign up together, and one contract and invoice for the system. Email us for a quote.

ComPAss Award support: info@thecompassaward.com · thecompassaward.com