Introduction
Following a literature review (Buchan 2006, unpublished), NHS Education for Scotland (NES) was commissioned to undertake a pilot of the Physician Assistant role in Scotland.

Physician Assistants (PAs) are a new role within healthcare, who can carry out a range of skills that traditionally have been conducted by doctors.

Why PAs?
Increasing pressures in the NHS:
- changes to medical contracts
- changes to medical careers (MMC)
- cost and resource issues

From the PAs:
"From my perspective the NHS is really getting to see what PAs do. I hope everyone feels they’re making a similar impact”
Doug Hudson PA-C, NHS Grampian

"The medical problems we see here are the same in the States, but way they are managed is different”
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References
Bullion J, Ball J, O’May F (2006) Physician Assistants in NHSScotland: Reviewing the Issues, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh (unpublished)

External Evaluation
The University of Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute will complete an evaluation of the PA role, by the end of 2008. Interim results include:
- very positive impact from patients, team members and supervisors
- good team working
- prescribing restrictions problematic

Next Steps
Once the evaluation has been considered, a decision will be made about commissioning an education programme.

For Further Information Contact:
dorothy.armstrong@nes.scot.nhs.uk
0131 331 8103