



NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Who are nurse practitioners?

A nurse practitioner (NP) is a registered nurse with advanced academic and clinical education and experience who is qualified to meet the majority of patients' health care needs, such as managing most common and many chronic illnesses. Moreover, NPs promote a holistic approach to health care and emphasize the overall health and wellness of their patients.

Where do nurse practitioners provide patient care?

With a strong emphasis on primary care, NPs are employed within several specialties, including neonatology, nurse-midwifery, pediatrics, school health, family and adult health, women's health, mental health, home care, geriatrics and acute care. NPs focus largely on health maintenance, disease prevention, counseling and patient education. However, they are fully qualified to be involved in patient diagnosis and treatment, which also includes some prescriptive authority. The scope of an NP's practice varies depending upon state regulations.

What are some of the advantages to nurse practitioner care?

NPs are uniquely focused on "caring" as opposed to "curing." NPs combine nursing education and experience with thorough education in medical care for their specialty area. They take the "whole person" into account, not just the immediate ailment. NPs provide patient-centered care. They are specifically trained to educate and support individuals and families, helping them change behaviors and make informed, individual choices about their health and their health care.

How cost-effective are nurse practitioners?

Very. NPs provide high-quality, cost-effective care. One study compared the costs of care for two primary care problems and found that the cost of care given by NPs was 20 percent less than the cost of care given by physicians.