



ABOUT NURSE PRACTITIONERS FAST FACTS

Definition

A nurse practitioner (NP) is a registered nurse with advanced academic preparation and skills who is licensed to provide health care services independently and in collaboration with physicians and other health care professionals.

Scope of Practice

A nurse practitioner provides medical care to patients of all ages with a focus on health promotion and disease prevention. A nurse practitioner is a health care provider who:

- performs history and physical exams,
- diagnoses and treats medical problems,
- orders and interprets diagnostic and laboratory tests,
- educates and counsels individuals, families and groups,
- does health care maintenance exams such as immunizations and well-child care.

Education

It is the official position of the California Association for Nurse Practitioners that a Master's degree is the appropriate educational preparation for a nurse practitioner. Once certified, a nurse practitioner must complete 30 units of continuing education every two years to maintain their RN license/NP certification. A nurse practitioner is certified by the California Board of Registered Nursing and practices under the Nurse Practice Act.

Other Facts about Nurse Practitioners

Nurse practitioners work in both rural and urban settings. Nurse practitioner specialties include acute care, adult, family, gerontology, neonatal, occupational health, pediatrics, psychiatric/mental health, school, and women's health (Ob-Gyn).

Statistics on Nurse Practitioners

- There are 88,000 nurse practitioners in the United States.
- There are 10,959 nurse practitioners in California.
- There are 6,877 California nurse practitioners who prescribe/ "furnish" medications.

Survey of Nurse Practitioners

The following statistics were revealed in a November 1993 survey of California nurse practitioners.

- Nurse practitioners are experienced: 71% have been nurse practitioners more than five years, 51% more than 10 years.
- Nurse practitioners are primary care providers: 90% work in primary care.
- Nurse practitioners increase access to care: 68% see Medi-Cal patients, 51% see the uninsured, and 27% care for indigent patients