

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Position Statement on Nurse Practitioner Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

The American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Scope of Practice (2002) describes nurse practitioners (NPs) as primary care providers in ambulatory, acute and long-term settings. According to their practice specialty these primary care providers deliver nursing and medical services to individuals, families, and groups.

The completion of a formal graduate educational program and a commitment to life-long learning and professional self-development assures society that NPs acquire and maintain the theoretical knowledge and clinical skills appropriate for their scope of practice. Formal graduate education also enables NPs to achieve and maintain professional certification and statutory recognition.

GRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION

Entry-level preparation for NP practice is a master's degree. NP education provides theoretical and empirical knowledge in addition to clinical, technical and ethical learning experiences for delivery of care and role development in advanced nursing practice. The emphasis in a master's program preparing NPs is on the development of clinical and professional expertise necessary for comprehensive primary care and specialty care practice in a variety of settings. The curriculum should be designed to prepare graduates to qualify for certification in their anticipated area of practice. NP programs also cultivate advanced skills in the roles of educator, counselor, advocate, consultant, manager, researcher, and mentor. The clinical portion of the curriculum should be delivered by faculty who maintain current clinical expertise, licensure, and certification. The development of skills and expertise are based upon seven content domains and should result in the nurse practitioner core and specialty competencies. The NP content domains are:

- Management of Patient Health/Illness Status
 - Health Promotion/Health Protection and Disease Prevention
 - Management of Patient Illness
- The Nurse Practitioner-Patient Relationship
- The Teaching-Coaching Function
- Professional Role
- Managing and Negotiating Health Care Delivery Systems
- Monitoring and Ensuring the Quality of Health Care Practices
- Cultural Competence

Selected competencies that should be demonstrated upon graduation include:

- Health promotion and disease prevention based on principles of epidemiology and emphasizing the distribution of diseases and associated risk factors within populations.
- Comprehensive assessment including:
 - * Collection of historical data
 - * Collection of psychosocial data
 - * Recognition of risk factors
 - * Physical examination

- Use and interpretation of screening techniques and diagnostic techniques, tests, and tools.
- Diagnosis of health and disease of all body systems through critical diagnostic reasoning and critical decision making by synthesizing client assessment data.
- Treatment and management of health and disease of all body systems utilizing pharmacologic, nonpharmacologic and complementary/alternative healing modalities.
- Psychological, psychobiological and physiological processes of health.
- Pathophysiology of disease.
- Knowledge of the personal, developmental, and spiritual context of health and disease.
- Knowledge of human diversity and social issues impacting health and disease.
- Application of interpersonal communication skills and counseling techniques.
- Community assessment skills that emphasize the unique needs of specific populations and the context in which interventions are provided.
- Application of negotiation, conflict resolution, risk management and business management skills in the clinical settings
- Concepts of managed care and case management.
- Principles of bioethics and leadership in ethical decision-making.
- Environmental concepts of care.
- Knowledge of health economics and health care financing.
- Health policy and its application to nurse practitioner practice at the local, state national and international level.
- Experience in interdisciplinary practice environments and team approach to health care delivery.
- Critiquing and utilizing research in health care delivery.
- Principles of collaboration with researchers on research design for clinical interventions and outcomes of care.
- Promotion of nurse practitioner practice through self-regulation, credentialing, public education and mentoring.

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