Nurse Practitioner

Nurse practitioners practice independently with support from the Alaska State Practice Act. Nurse practitioner's obtain medical histories, perform physical examinations, diagnose and treat acute and chronic health conditions, and prescribe medications and treatments. In addition, Nurse practitioners may provide prenatal care and family planning services, well-child care (including screening and immunizations), conduct annual exams for adults, and complete health counseling and prevention services.

Nurse practitioners are advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) who have advanced education and clinical training to focusing on diagnosis and treatment of patients independently. Nurse practitioners work with families and people of all ages. They provide health care services and education that optimize health and encourage informed patient decisions. Nurse practitioners work in a variety of settings including hospitals, clinics, or schools. Nurse practitioners can own, and operate their own clinics.

Nurse practitioners may specialize in areas such as: family practice, women's health, occupational health, oncology, neonatal, pediatrics, geriatrics, or psychiatry. Increasingly, they work in specialty clinics, with allergists, gynecologists, cardiologists, and others. Career options are virtually unlimited, and include employment as instructors in clinical and university settings, in research, or administration.

Nurse practitioners work in both rural and urban settings. Some of these settings include: community health centers, hospitals, clinics, public health departments, nursing homes, and school and college student health clinics. There are many job opportunities for Nurse Practitioners seeking employment in a rural environment.

Educational Requirements
All nurse practitioners have training beyond a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. An educational plan looks like this:
• Graduation from high school with a college preparatory background.
• Completion of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing to become a registered nurse.
• Completion of at least one year of fulltime nursing experience.
• Completion of a Master of Science in Nursing. APRN programs are available for nurse practitioners in family, psychiatric mental health, pediatrics, women's health, geriatrics, and others.
• Nurses must pass a national certification exam to become a Nurse Practitioner.

Hourly Wage Range:
$51.03-$61.19 (Mean $55.61)
*Based on 2016 Alaska DOL data

Years in School:
5-7 years (after high school graduation).

Academic Programs in Alaska
The University of Alaska Anchorage's (UAA) School of Nursing has a master's degree program for Registered Nurses (RN) who hold a bachelor's degree. RNs may pursue a master's degree in the specialty area of Family Nurse Practitioner, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, or Nursing Leadership. The Nursing Leadership area of study will not lead to Nurse Practitioner certification. The Doctorate of Nursing Practice is the recommended path for APRN practice.

The UAA Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) program began in August, 2015. DNP students must have Master of Science degree with either a Family Nurse Practitioner or Psychiatric Mental Health certification to apply. In August 2018, the first BSN to DNP program with be available at UAA.

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