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September 2020



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The Nevada State Board of Nursing News publishes news and information quarterly about Board actions, regulations, and activities. Articles may be reprinted without permission; attribution is appreciated.



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# WORDS

• FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Cathy Dinauer, MSN, RN, FRE

**T**he year 2020 started as the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, but quickly became the year of COVID-19.

Nursing education during the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging at best. Nursing programs have developed creative opportunities to educate their students while still conforming to regulatory mandates. A global lockdown of educational institutions caused interruptions in students' learning.

When the Emergency Directive was initiated in Nevada in March, not only did our nursing schools close, but the clinical sites where students trained had to halt having students in their facilities. Education training seemed to have come to a

standstill. Our educators, however, adapted to alternative teaching strategies developing remote learning options for their students. Fortunately, our Board approved a policy allowing for 50% simulation in nursing programs. This policy was challenged during the initial phase of the pandemic because many schools needed to increase the amount of simulation. Evidence exists to support 50% simulation, but no studies exist yet to support student outcomes beyond the use of 50% simulation. Students are then at risk of having deficits in their education and may have difficulty successfully passing NCLEX.

At the beginning of the pandemic, most of the Pearson-VUE NCLEX testing

centers were closed. Many students were faced with long wait times to get scheduled for their exams. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing worked with Pearson-VUE to open testing centers across the country. Social distancing measures are now in effect, and test candidates have been able to get scheduled quickly.

It has been valuable to work with our educational partners and gain an understanding of the dire dilemmas many of our nursing programs have been facing. Educators and nursing leaders have worked to develop academic partnerships between a prelicensure program and a healthcare facility. No one wants to see a student not be able to complete a program due to some unavoidable circumstances.

Navigating the new normal, we have learned to be more flexible and open-minded. Collectively, regulators, educators, and facility leaders are working together to identify solutions and remove barriers to learning. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many changes in our lives, which may result in an abundance of fear and anxiety. Nurses are resilient, and it is all more important to maintain your emotional health.



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# MESSAGE

• FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mary-Ann Brown, RN, MSN CHPCA GCHCE HEC-C

In the last Nevada State Board of Nursing (NSBN) newsletter I devoted my column to the COVID-19 pandemic and asked my fellow Board members to share their thoughts – both personally and professionally. When I wrote that article, I had thought that by this time we would be “back to normal”. However, in Nevada and indeed most areas of the world, we find ourselves still engaged in a public health battle. As the Director of Palliative Care and Clinical Ethics at Renown, I am faced with tough and often life-ending situations. I have always admired those who provide care to patients, but that admiration has grown tremendously as I watch my colleagues step up to the new challenges because of COVID. Teams have adjusted to the continual use of masks and PPE, and surprisingly have picked up new talents such as navigating virtual meetings between patients and loved ones through ZOOM. One personal story that perhaps is indicative of the environment we find ourselves in involved participating in the wedding of a patient in the outside courtyard of the hospital so that an extremely ill father could give his daughter away. Our nurses and clinical team planned and executed this touching event, and again made me immensely proud and grateful to be a part of the nursing profession.

Our NSBN has also risen to the challenges presented by COVID. Board members and staff have tried several different platforms to host Board meetings. We have learned how to conduct Board business including using Robert’s Rules and following the open meeting laws in a new format. The NSBN staff has sustained all key functions while maintaining the safety of staff, licensees and the public. Our Board has been able to efficiently meet the needs of Nevada’s CNAs, RNs, LPNs and APRNs. In addition the move to on-line renewals and applications several years ago has made it possible for nurses and CNAs to receive quick and safe service from the NSBN.

The Annual meeting of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing was held in August, and not surprisingly, it was virtual. That was the first time that had ever happened, and as one might expect, the logistics proved challenging for both those planning and presenting as well as all of us attending. Voting by the delegate assembly was an issue. It took on an entirely new flavor as we all figured out how to conduct debates and then vote before the time expired. All the required work at the Assembly was completed, but many commented on the lack of opportunity to network and engage in conversations with colleagues. As you might expect, everyone

looks forward to the end of the restrictions required to maintain safety so that we could participate in live sessions.

This year finds me completing my role as President as well as two terms on the NSBN. I am grateful and honored to have had the opportunity to serve and for the many professional and personally rewarding experiences I have had as a Board member and officer. Nursing regulation is a complex, interesting and perhaps above all, a necessary segment of the nursing profession and I encourage nurses, CNAs and APRNs to learn more about the NSBN and Board committees and apply to serve.

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# OBTAINING CREDENTIALS AS A SURGICAL FIRST ASSIST

Upon completing my graduate studies as a nurse practitioner, I took an opportunity to work in general surgery, which included working in the operating room as a first assistant. It was a new role for me and a new role in the community where I practiced. Much has changed since embarking on the role in 2004, but the opportunities are still there for a niche practice as an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN).

The role of registered nurse first assistant (RNFA) is a scope of practice role recognized in all 50 states<sup>1</sup>. Founded in 1949, the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) establishes itself as a community for operating room nurses and prides itself on being a place for evidence-based practice and education to promote standards of practice in perioperative nursing.

For an APRN practicing in this area, they would first meet the AORN Standards for RN First Assistant Education Programs<sup>2</sup>. These education requirements include six standards areas with a minimum six formal semester credit hours, post registered nurse (RN) education program (may be undergraduate or graduate credits), proof of RN licensure, specific didactic requirements, a clinical component, and for an APRNs proof of their APRN recognition. For APRNs without perioperative experience, individual assessment of skills, knowledge, and competency is recommended before starting a program.

Institutions who credential APRNs in the first assistant role grant privileges to practice. This process will likely include verification of professional education, licensure, certification, experience, references, qualifications for the role, competency, continuing education, malpractice, and criminal history.

As of January 2016, APRNs working as first assistants must have attended a standalone program to meet the AORN standards of practice in this role. Those who have worked in this area prior do not have the same requirement. A new position statement also calls on all RNs to be baccalaureate-prepared as the entry-level for the RNFA program as of January 1, 2020. Thus, the baccalaureate degree will be the entry-level degree for the RNFA in 2020 and beyond<sup>1</sup>.

National certification is available through the National Assistant at Surgery Certification (NASC). The applicant must hold a master's, doctoral, or post-masters certificate in an advanced practice program, have certification as an APRN, must be currently working as an RNFA, hold a current, unrestricted RN license, have completed an acceptable RNFA program (meets AORN standards), and have a minimum of 2000 hours of practice as an RNFA. The hours of practice may include preoperative, intraoperative, and postoperative care<sup>3</sup>. The cost of the exam is \$550 with certification conferred for five years. Recertification is obtained through examination, contact hours, or points.

There are many RN first assist program meeting the standards set forth by the AORN. Programs are available through universities and community colleges as well as private programs. Many programs offer didactics online and onsite suture workshops. A quick search of job opportunities identified 31 surgical first assistant jobs in Nevada in a variety of settings. None of the job listings was specific to the APRN as a first assist.

In my own experience, I enjoyed the role of RNFA as a new APRN. It was exciting, and I learned a lot about an area I had little experience. I completed the course in my off time, and I was able to get through the didactics in about three months working on learning modules every day. They also sent training kits to practice skills and learn intricate suturing. Part of the program was an onsite learning workshop for six full days. It was a lot of work, but rewarding and a tremendous learning experience. We did everything from simple suturing to learning about different types of surgery in a hands-on environment. Upon completion of the suture workshop and didactics, I completed a final exam and documented clinical hours. When it was all said and done, I completed my course in approximately six months from when I received the materials to the final submission of clinical hours. I also earned nine hours of community college credit for all this work!

I encourage any RN or APRN to consider the role of first assistant in surgery. The work is interesting, technical, and never the same from day-to-day. Good luck!

## References:

1. AORN – RN First Assist Resources. Downloaded from <https://www.aorn.org/guidelines/clinical-resources/rn-first-assistant-resources>
2. AORN – Standards for RN First Assistant Education Programs (2014). Downloaded from <https://www.aorn.org/guidelines/clinical-resources/rn-first-assistant-resources>
3. National Assistant at Surgery Certification (NASC). CRNFA Application. Downloaded from <https://nascertification.com/crnfa/application-and-candidate-handbook/>



## Nurse Practices in the Era of COVID-19

In this era of nursing shortages, due in part to the COVID-19 outbreak, nurse resources are being stretched thin, with ever-increasing demands placed on nurses by their employers. However, nurses cannot afford to compromise their licenses and buckle under direct or indirect pressure to cut corners with respect to standard nurse practices. Here are some **DOs and DON'Ts**, legal advice resulting from a number of recent experiences I've witnessed since the COVID-19 outbreak:

1. **DO** require that you receive proper training on all new equipment and software.
2. **DO** ask for help if you are overwhelmed or have been given more work than you can handle, in writing. Don't let superiors intimidate you into performing below acceptable, required nursing standards.
3. **DO** seek help from the NSBN when your employer makes unreasonable demands. Ask for Sam McCord at the NSBN.
4. **DO NOT** falsify records, ever. If you can't finish your notes and charting during your shift due to the assigned work load, tell your supervisors, in writing that you need more time, help or less work.
5. **DO NOT** remain at a job where you cannot complete all of the required work during your shift. If your employer isn't responsive, find another job.
6. **DO NOT** speak with anyone about allegations of misconduct before seeking legal advice. Don't speak to an investigator, a fellow worker, or HR. Sometimes, this is hard advice to follow. My general rule is that if you think you are going to be terminated, resign and find another job elsewhere (there are exceptions).

**Craig Perry** has represented hundreds of nurses before the Nevada State Board of Nursing. He offers a free initial consultation and will provide you with advice and encouragement if a letter of complaint/investigation has been or may be filed against you. He handles cases for APRNs, RNs, LPNs and CNAs. For immediate help, call **702-893-4777** or email his assistant, **Tyrin**, at **tyrin@craigperry.com**. We are located in North Las Vegas. You can also visit us at **www.lvnurseattorney.com** for more information.

# DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE: DNP

**A**dvanced practice registered nurse (APRN) is an umbrella term that includes nurse practitioners (NPs), midwives, and clinical nurse specialists. NPs are required to be nationally certified and licensed in the state(s) of practice. While certification is a national recognition, each state defines the scope of practice individually. The Nevada State Board of Nursing and licensure laws recognize full practice authority permitting NPs to practice to the fullest extent of their education, preparation, and training. NPs may work independently to assess, diagnose, and treat along with prescribing medications. The American Academy of Nurse Practitioners launched a million-dollar campaign called, “We Choose NPs.” This campaign raised awareness of NPs’ critical role in expanding access to primary care for millions of Americans and informed the public on NPs’

direct access and patients’ choices (American Association of Nurse Practitioners, 2020).

Parallel to other APRN roles, NPs are prepared to serve in advanced specialty nursing roles. NPs have specialized knowledge and skills acquired through graduate-level education. APRNs formal training and scope of practice are referenced with their designated credentials. Professionals with a doctorate in nursing practice (DNP) have achieved the highest level of education and preparation for clinical nursing practice - a terminal degree in the discipline.

According to the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners 2020 database, there are more than 290,000 NPs in the United States, and less than 1.2% of nurses hold a doctoral degree as a DNP [The American Association of College of Nurses (AACN, 2020)]. Why is a DNP degree important?

Today’s healthcare landscape demands the highest level of scientific knowledge and practice expertise assuring the most optimal quality patient outcomes (AACN, 2020). Similar to other health disciplines, nursing has moved in the direction of preparing professionals with practice doctorates. DNP-prepared nurses focus on evidence-based practice and are masterful in closing the gap between research and practice to provide the uppermost level of health care.

The proliferation of doctoral degree titles in nursing (and other disciplines) has presented opportunities for broadening knowledge among the public and the healthcare environment. As a doctorate-prepared nurse practitioner, I am proud to be a part of the healthcare community and blend my extensive nursing preparation, expertise, and skills into care delivery. Patients often ask, what would you like to be called? Because I have attained a terminal degree, I use my earned DNP degree title - Dr. Spatar.

NPs and DNP nurses hold a variety of professional roles such as providing care in practice settings, healthcare executives/management, clinical researchers, nursing faculty/education, along with other leadership and innovative roles. Should you desire to read more about a clinical DNP degree, sharing a resource - the DNP-Fact-Sheet (American Association College of Nursing, 2019). Regardless of the role, these nurse leaders are essential to care teams and the healthcare system.



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### References

American Association College of Nursing (2020). Creating a more highly qualified nursing workforce. Retrieved from <https://www.aacnnursing.org/News-Information/Fact-Sheets/Nursing-workforce>

American Association College of Nursing (2019). DNP-fact-sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.aacnnursing.org/News-Information/Fact-Sheets/DNP-Fact-Sheet>

American Association of Nurse Practitioners (2020). A national awareness campaign starring you. Retrieved from <https://www.aanp.org/about/about-the-american-association-of-nurse-practitioners-aanp/media/media-campaigns/a-national-awareness-campaign-starring-you>

### Fact Sheet:

#### The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

On October 25, 2004, the member schools affiliated with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) voted to endorse the *Position Statement on the Practice Doctorate in Nursing*. This decision called for moving the current level of preparation necessary for advanced nursing practice from the master's degree to the doctorate-level by the year 2015. This endorsement was preceded by almost four years of research and consensus-building by an AACN task force charged with examining the need for the practice doctorate with a variety of stakeholder groups.

#### Introducing the Doctor of Nursing Practice

- In many institutions, advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), including Nurse Practitioners, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Certified Nurse-Midwives, and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, are prepared in master's-degree programs that often carry a credit load equivalent to doctoral degrees in the other health professions. AACN's position statement calls for educating APRNs and other nurses seeking top leadership/organizational roles in DNP programs.
- DNP curricula build on traditional master's programs by providing content in evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and systems leadership, among other key areas.
- The DNP is designed for nurses seeking a terminal degree in nursing practice and offers an alternative to research-focused doctoral programs. DNP-prepared nurses are well-equipped to fully implement the science developed by nurse researchers prepared in PhD, DNS, and other research-focused nursing doctorates.

#### Why Move to the DNP?

- The changing demands of this nation's complex healthcare environment require the highest level of scientific knowledge and practice expertise to assure quality patient outcomes. The Institute of Medicine, Joint Commission, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and other authorities have called for reconceptualizing educational programs that prepare today's health professionals.
- Some of the many factors building momentum for change in nursing education at the graduate level include: the rapid expansion of knowledge underlying practice; increased complexity of patient care; national concerns about the quality of care and patient safety; shortages of nursing personnel which demands a higher level of preparation for leaders who can design and assess care; shortages of doctorally-prepared nursing faculty; and increasing educational expectations for the preparation of other members of the healthcare team.
- In a 2005 report titled *Advancing the Nation's Health Needs: NIH Research Training Programs*, the National Academy of Sciences called for nursing to develop a non-research clinical doctorate to prepare expert practitioners who can also serve as clinical faculty. AACN's work to advance the DNP is consistent with this call to action.
- Nursing is moving in the direction of other health professions in the transition to the DNP. Medicine (MD), Dentistry (DDS), Pharmacy (PharmD), Psychology (PsyD), Physical Therapy (DPT), and Audiology (AudD) all require or offer practice doctorates.

#### Sustaining Momentum for the DNP

- After a two-year consensus-building process, AACN member institutions voted to endorse the *Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* on October 30, 2006. Schools developing a DNP are encouraged to use this document, which defines the curricular elements and competencies that must be present in a practice doctorate in nursing.
- In July 2006, the AACN Board of Directors endorsed the final report of the Task Force on the Roadmap to the DNP, which was developed to assist schools navigating the DNP program approval process. This report includes recommendations for securing institutional approval to transition an MSN into a DNP program; preparing faculty to teach in DNP programs; addressing regulatory, licensure, accreditation, and certification issues; and collecting evaluation data. A DNP Tool Kit was developed using information and resources contained in the Roadmap report.
- In 2014, the AACN Board of Directors commissioned the RAND Corporation to conduct a national study to examine the progress made by nursing schools in transitioning to the practice doctorate. The report, titled *The DNP by 2015: A Study of the Institutional, Political, and Professional Issues that Facilitate or Impede Establishing a Post-Baccalaureate Doctor of Nursing Practice Program*, found near universal agreement among nurse educators about the value of the DNP in preparing individuals for advanced nursing practice.

- Schools nationwide that have initiated the DNP are reporting sizable and competitive student enrollment. Employers are quickly recognizing the unique contribution these expert nurses are making in the practice arena, and the demand for DNP-prepared nurses continues to grow.
- The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), the leading accrediting agency for baccalaureate- and graduate-degree nursing programs in the U.S., began accrediting DNP programs in Fall 2008. To date, 286 DNP programs have been accredited by CCNE.

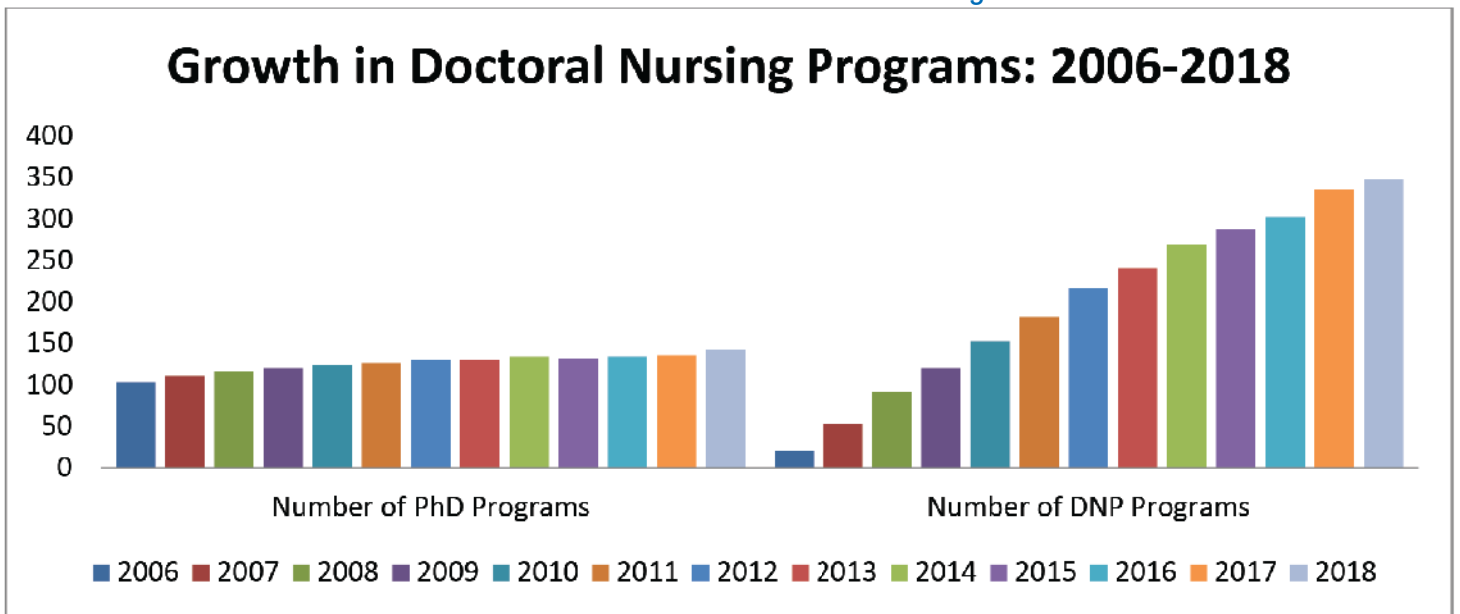
### Current DNP Program Statistics

348 DNP programs are currently enrolling students at schools of nursing nationwide, and an additional 98 new DNP programs are in the planning stages (50 post-baccalaureate and 48 post-master's programs).

DNP programs are now available in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. States with the most programs (10 or more programs) include California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

From 2017 to 2018, the number of students enrolled in DNP programs increased from 29,093 to 32,678. During that same period, the number of DNP graduates increased from 6,090 to 7,039.

### Growth in Practice- and Research-Focused Doctoral Programs: 2006-2018



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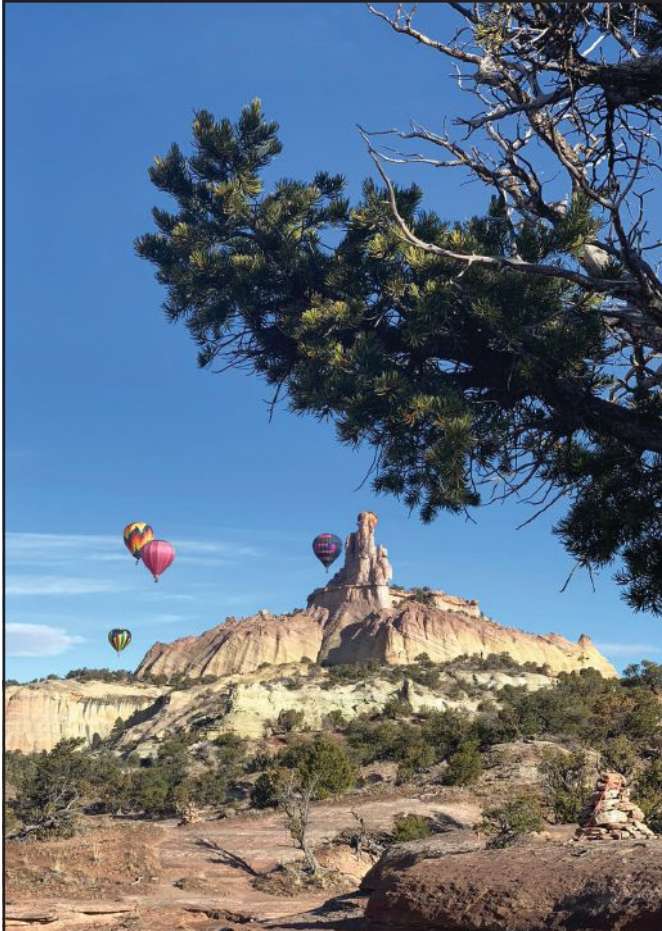
# THE EMERGENCY NURSE PRACTITIONER

The American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) recognizes the Emergency Nurse Practitioner (ENP) as a board-certified emergency specialist treating urgent and emergent conditions throughout the lifespan. There are several paths toward becoming an ENP (AANP, 2020b). Option one, a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) must have work experience in an emergency or urgent care setting. Then, the FNP may sit for the ENP board exam. Option two, the FNP may complete a post-degree fellowship specializing in emergency medicine. Third, the NP can complete an academic ENP program either as a post-degree or as a stand-alone NP program.

ENPs provide care across the lifespan in hospital emergency departments (ED), stand-alone EDs, and urgent care clinics (AANP, 2019). FNP's who have practiced in EDs and urgent care clinics for at least 2000 hours may sit for the ENP board exam (AANP, 2020a). Additional requirements include that candidates must have at least 30 procedure hours of continuing education hours within the last five years (AANP, 2020a).

Vanderbilt University initially developed the ENP track in the early 2000s by blending the Acute Care NP role and FNP role (VUSN, 2018). Currently, there are almost a dozen ENP academic programs in the country, and nearly twenty post-degree fellowship programs. Vanderbilt's Director of the ENP Program, Dr. Jennifer Wilbeck, also founded the American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners (AAENP) in 2014 (VUSN, 2018).

While many FNP's and Acute Care Nurse Practitioners (ACNP) are currently working in EDs across the country, many hospitals and private provider groups that staff hospitals are seeking board-certified ENPs. The unique preparation for the role means that ENPs are better suited to care for the diverse needs of the ED population. Many patients present for primary care complaints because they may not have a primary care provider, or they may not have easy access to that provider when they need it. However, the higher acuity setting means that ENPs must have additional training or experience to maintain



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the practice standards outlined by the American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners (AAENP) (American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners, 2016).

My personal experience as a double-board certified FNP and ENP is similar to those outlined above. I began my NP career as an FNP working in urgent care. My nursing background had been in the ED. I wanted to learn more and increase my confidence in caring for more acute patients. A colleague told me about the AANP ENP testing option. I reviewed the eligibility criteria and realized that I met the requirement for practice hours. The types of patients we cared for at our urgent care were very similar to the patients seen in an ED fast-track department, which are often NP run. I utilized an ENP board certification preparation program via a mobile application for my smartphone. It tracked my progress and gave me an estimated percentage probability of passing my ENP board examination. As a result, I was able to pass my board certification successfully. I am very thankful for the opportunity to complete my ENP certification and it helps me in my everyday practice in a walk-in clinic because I can recognize potentially life-threatening conditions that can sometimes present in subtle ways.

The demand for ENPs will continue to grow. Lack of primary care, increased demand for primary care, increased demand for rural and underserved population healthcare are all trends occurring in healthcare currently (Nurse Journal, 2020). NPs are uniquely qualified to fill that void, especially those with specialty training (Nurse Journal, 2020).

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# THE VALUE OF A CNL

**A** Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) is a master's prepared nurse who, as a generalist clinician, can practice in any healthcare setting. They are the "go-to" person in their area of expertise. CNLs coordinate care, measure outcomes, laterally integrate care, conduct risk assessments, implement evidence-based practice (EBP) and quality improvement measures, and provide clinical leadership. The CNL's education focuses on advanced knowledge of health assessment, physiology, pharmacology, healthcare quality, and EBP. EBP is the driving factor for process improvement and is the baseline for all CNL practice. The success of the CNL role within a microsystem requires the support from nurse leaders and other disciplines.

A CNL is certified by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing through the National Commission of Certifying Agencies via an exam focused on CNL practice. A CNL must maintain an active nursing license. Currently, there are approximately 60 programs nationally that offer a CNL program either online or using a hybrid model. Nevada has one CNL program offered at the University Nevada, Reno. The purpose of this article is to show how CNLs have enhanced patient outcomes and impacted the delivery of healthcare throughout Nevada.

CNLs are change agents. During the COVID-19 pandemic, changes were imminent. At VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System (VASNHS), in Las Vegas, CNLs offered expertise in various ways during the pandemic. CNLs were detailed to other areas. As elective OR cases ceased during the pandemic, the OR CNL was detailed to use her expertise in developing and implementing the clinical workflow process. This included creating personal protective equipment practices to train and guide staff and visitors who had special permission to visit a loved one in the COVID ward. Education for screeners became crucial with the ever-changing guidelines. CNLs at VASNHS are involved with developing new policies to manage care for COVID patients and have been instrumental in coordinating efforts to ensure all staff receives training. The ICU CNL and Community Living Center CNL collaborated to offer mock survey training for reviewing the new process of managing cardiac arrests during the pandemic.

CNLs in Las Vegas and Reno successfully collaborated with nursing services, medicine, and infection control to facilitate the implementation of evidence-based guidelines to reduce catheter-associated urinary tract infections in acute care and long-term care settings. With the expertise of a CNL, ICU delirium rates decreased from 1.9 incidents per 1,000 patient days to 1 per 1,000 patient days at the Las Vegas VA. At the VASNHS, a CNL created a "Pit-Hold Room" on the emergency department information system

(EDIS). The EDIS is a communication board the emergency department (ED) utilizes for communication patient status. The Pit-Hold Room communicates to the charge nurse that the pit provider has seen the veteran and will discharge the veteran from the lobby following a minor test. This eliminates the need to tie up a valuable ED room. Donia Till, VASNHS, explains, "As a CNL myself, I was able to implement and collaborate with multiple disciplines, including frontline staff, to change admission charting in our LVR3 Patient Rehab Center to improve nursing charting on admissions."

In procedural areas, technology is ever changing, and it is of the utmost importance that staff have the knowledge and skills to safely implement new practices, procedures, and technology utilizing EBP. Education is a large part of a CNL's daily role. The OR CNL conducts over thirty in-service trainings annually to ensure that her staff has the latest updates, guidelines, and knowledge to practice safely.

The vast role of a CNL extends to not only acute care settings but also outpatient care settings. As a current assistant nurse manager, who practiced as a CNL in outpatient primary care clinics (PCC), Ms. Sandra Guerrero had significant involvement in policy and procedures for PCC. She engaged in revamping the electronic health record template for the most updated practices and created a new employee education course to improve practice, patient care, and staff morale. Michael Yazinka states, "The best part of being a CNL is that you are the liaison between the bedside and the administration."

CNLs get to reach out to frontline staff and communicate with leadership to make a difference in practice. A CNL acts as a leader, resource person, educator, and promoter of EBP. Advocacy for patients, staff, and EBP at the bedside are important for safety and improved patient outcomes. A CNL from Reno shares, "My job is to improve outcomes for the veterans, and advocate for the nurses to ensure that they have the training and resources necessary to provide the best possible care."

A CNL's role is integrative and uses collaboration with multiple disciplines. As such, the West Regional International Clinical Nurse Leader Association was initiated by Ms. Tymeeka Davis of Las Vegas in 2018. The chapter meets quarterly in collaboration with the University of Nevada, Reno to provide networking opportunities for practicing and non-practicing CNLs. Kelly Presser shares that, "Although the CNL network seems small, we love to bounce ideas off each other, trade projects, and offer overall moral support. I can confidently say that being a CNL is the best job there is in nursing!"



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“Being a CNL is the best of both worlds you still get to be clinical, but you facilitate changes that improve patient outcomes, improve processes, perform interdisciplinary collaboration, and laterally integrate care,” states Kimberly Macasieb.

The utilization of CNLs is substantially influential for sustaining change that improves patient safety, outcomes, and morale because they are advocates for patients, staff, and EBP. A CNL is a valuable resource for any healthcare setting.

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# RNPC SCHOLARS: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE

**T**raditionally nursing education programs have trained registered nurses to work within acute care settings. However, with the shift of healthcare moving to a preventive, primary care, community-based approach, students and practicing registered nurses need to be prepared to provide care within these changing delivery systems. According to Wojnar and Whelan (2017), for this paradigm shift in healthcare to occur, all stakeholders need to be involved, including nursing education. Additionally, the American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing asserts, “creating a future that maximizes the role of the registered nurse in an evolving healthcare environment will require sustained forward movement in nursing practice, education, research, and leadership” (AAACN, 2016, position statement). Through the creation and implementation of the Registered Nurses in Primary Care (RNPC) scholar initiative, nursing students will receive the knowledge and skills needed to function within primary care teams while addressing population health needs. The RNPC scholar initiative is supported and funded through a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant.

## RNPC Grant and Scholars

Roseman University of Health Sciences College of Nursing was awarded, in the summer of 2018, an HRSA grant entitled the “Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention – Registered Nurses in Primary Care Training Program.” The goals of the RNPC grant are to:

- Increase the number of undergraduate students who are committed to practice in underserved and rural areas;
- Develop and implement a replicable undergraduate nursing curriculum that provides education and experiential training related to primary care;
- Enhance registered nurses abilities to address population health outcomes and the public health needs of underserved populations supporting the initiatives of Healthy People 2020; and
- Provide career support and guidance to the RNPC scholars to increase the number of baccalaureate-prepared nurses who will be employed in rural and medically underserved areas.

The overall intent of the RNPC grant is to recruit and train nursing students and current RNs to practice in community-based, primary care teams. The hope is that this initiative will ultimately increase access to care and improve population health outcomes for underserved populations. Through the offering of educational workshops, curricular enhancements, and unique clinical experiences, practicing nurses and RNPC nursing scholar students will receive the necessary training to address the primary healthcare

needs of various vulnerable populations. The RNPC training was implemented at the Roseman University of Health Sciences Nevada and Utah campuses and the surrounding communities within rural and underserved areas, thereby supporting the initiatives of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health People 2020 (<https://www.healthypeople.gov/>).

The RNPC Grant foresees enrollment in students participating in the RNPC Scholars to increase from year two through year four of the grant. It is anticipated that clinical groups would have eight students per group. Therefore, student increases are forecasted in increments of eight and are as follows:

BSN Students	Year 1*	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 (Post-Grant)
Nevada	0	8	16	24	24
Utah	0	8	16	24	24
Total	0	16	32	48	48

Practicing RNs	Year 1*	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 (Post-Grant)
Nevada	0	12	15	19	19
Utah	0	12	15	19	19
Total	0	24	30	36	36

\*Year one focused on capacity building

## Methodology

Several courses are identified to provide the didactic and clinical knowledge and experiences that address the key concepts associated with the RNPC training initiative. Examples of these concepts includes underserved populations, vulnerability, social determinants of health, rural health, care coordination, and leadership principles. Moreover, RNPC students will earn a minimum of 150 hours in clinical experiences within primary care settings that include rural health locations. Students will travel to rural and underserved areas to obtain training in primary care settings both within Utah and Nevada. Identified clinical courses for primary care experience includes Fundamentals of Nursing, Community and Mental Health Nursing, and Senior Practicum.

## Curriculum Enhancements - Clinical and Didactic

Our goal in including primary care and rural nursing education is to offer students the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to provide high-quality care based on a patient's specific needs.

Teaching at a higher level is not based on the students' ability to recall or reproduce information. It is helping the student understand and alter any misconceived view of reality they may have. There are a different set of strengths and challenges associated with living and working in rural areas. In these areas, you may still have children sometimes lending a hand on the farm or with the livestock, household chores or taking care of the younger kids, etc. Therefore, it is important to help the

students learn about primary care and take this education to the rural areas so that students can insert this information into their nursing context.

The student's education starts in the didactic arena. The curriculum needs to include didactic strategies that enable students to learn nursing skills, solve problems, and develop reflective and critical thinking. They can then take this information into the practice areas. The didactic strategies put into the curriculum support the nursing students' experiences of learning and then applying that information in their clinical experiences. In most nursing programs in the past, the curriculum is based on working in a hospital or inpatient unit. For our purpose, we changed the student's clinical setting to a primary care

setting, rather than the usual inpatient or community-based agency settings.

The didactic portion of the program starts in fundamentals, where students are first exposed to the idea of primary care. This concept is then threaded throughout the program, along with topics that are vital to the goals of Healthy People 2020, such as the opioid crisis and childhood obesity. These topics are important and approached differently depending on the community you are working with. Teaching this in the didactic portion, and then helping the students visualize it by having them work in rural areas helps solidify what they are learning. In this way, the students can take this information with them when they graduate and prepares them for working within a variety of different communities.

The goal is to expose student nurses to the role of a rural health nurse. In this role, the nurse works with patients who live in geographically and culturally remote areas with very little access to healthcare. Students will expand their skills in all areas of nursing by way of seeing the variety of patients routinely cared for in these types of locations. The experience will help them learn the qualities needed to serve as a primary caregiver to an entire community.

## Student Experiences

The RNPC students had their first primary care experiences in the fall of 2019 at rural locations. Students in Nevada and Utah were exposed to the challenges that can occur when providing and seeking healthcare in underserved areas. Students commented that initially, they felt some culture shock with being in a rural environment as opposed to living in a large urban area. However, the students felt extremely welcomed within these communities by the healthcare providers, staff, and community members and quickly overcame their nervousness. Additionally, the students commented that during the clinical rotations that they felt challenged and supported to learn and apply the nursing knowledge that they had obtained. Several students remarked that after this clinical experience they would now consider living and practicing as a professional nurse in a rural community.



Professor Barrus with her clinical group of RN Scholars in Ft. Defiance, Arizona.



Professor Alexander with her clinical group of RN Scholars in Ely, Nevada.

*continued on page 18*

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*continued from page 17*

## Conclusion

Given the future shift of healthcare delivery to one that centers on primary care, it becomes imperative that nursing education reflects this change and ensures that students are prepared to provide care within these settings (Albutt, et al., 2013). This includes updating nursing curriculum to include preventive and primary care-focused content with an emphasis on the concepts addressing underserved, rural health, vulnerability, care coordination, and the social determinants of

health. Furthermore, it is also important to provide practicing nurses with the knowledge and understanding of these same concepts as the healthcare arena evolves. Providing care in primary and community care settings is an exciting and challenging opportunity for the nursing profession. One student commented, "Being in a clinic that patients have to travel hours to come to due to their remote location, showed me how important preventative health and primary care is."

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## **Eligibility Requirements:**

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- Have practiced the equivalent of two years full-time as a registered nurse;
- Have completed 30 hours of continuing education in informatics nursing within the last three years; and
- Meet one of the following practice hour requirements:
  - Have practiced a minimum of 2,000 hours in informatics nursing within the last three years; or
  - Have practiced a minimum of 1,000 hours in informatics nursing in the last three years and completed a minimum of 12 semester hours of academic credit in informatics courses that are part of a graduate-level informatics nursing program; or
  - Have completed a graduate program in informatics nursing containing a minimum of 200 hours of faculty-supervised practicum in informatics nursing.

## **Program Availability:**

This certification is available through the American Nurses Credentialing Center. You may visit the following website for more information: <https://www.nursingworld.org/our-certifications/informatics-nurse/>.

## **Description of the Certification:**

Certified Professional in Healthcare Information and Management Systems (CPHIMS)

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  - B. Graduate degree or higher from an accredited college or university plus three years of information and management systems experience. Information and management systems experience refers to work experience in systems analysis, design, selection, implementation, support, and maintenance, testing and evaluation, privacy and security, information systems, clinical informatics, and/or management engineering. Of those three years of experience, at least two of those years must be

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## **Program Availability:**

This certification is available through the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS). You may visit the following website for more information: <https://www.himss.org/>

## **Job Perspectives:**

According to a 2020 HIMSS Nursing Informatics Workforce Survey, the job perspective for nursing informatics is promising and continues to grow. Depending on the organization, a nurse informaticist can hold titles such as nursing informatics specialist, clinical analyst, and manager or director of clinical informatics.

## **Personal Experience:**

During the past ten years, nursing informatics has provided me with endless opportunities for learning, collaboration, and professional growth. Although my bedside career was focused on critical care, nursing informatics presented new opportunities for me to work in settings such as surgery or labor & delivery. Nursing informatics is a dynamic specialty and requires a multifaceted skill set. Depending on the task at hand, I may be required to teach, troubleshoot, analyze data, or fulfill the role of a project manager. As both healthcare and technology continue to evolve, I'm excited about the upcoming opportunities that await the field of nursing informatics.

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**RN** • 44,617 **LPN** • 4,159 **CNA** • 9,593 **APRN** • 2,870 **CRNA** • 194

## ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The Nevada State Board of Nursing is advised by and appoints members to six standing advisory committees. Committee meetings are open to the public; agendas are posted on the Board's website and at community sites. We have 1 RN member open on Education Advisory Committee (1). We have 1 CNA advisory, 1 RN home health, and 1 RN acute care. There are no other openings. If you are interested in applying for a committee appointment to fill an upcoming opening, please visit the Board's website or call the Board office for an application.

## MEETINGS AND OPENINGS

The openings (listed in parentheses) will occur in the next six months. All meetings will be held via video-conference in Reno and Las Vegas.

**Advanced Practice Advisory Committee:**  
February 11, 2020  
~~May 5, 2020~~ Cancelled  
June 5, 2020  
August 18, 2020  
November 3, 2020

**Disability Advisory Committee**  
December 19, 2019  
February 13, 2020  
~~April 23, 2020~~ Cancelled  
June 18, 2020  
August 13, 2020  
October 15, 2020  
December 10, 2020

**Education Advisory Committee**  
January 10, 2020  
~~April 17, 2020~~ Cancelled  
August 21, 2020  
October 23, 2020

**Practice Advisory**  
February 4, 2020  
~~April 7, 2020~~ Cancelled  
June 2, 2020  
August 4, 2020  
October 6, 2020  
December 1, 2020

**CNA advisory**  
January 9, 2020  
~~April 9, 2020~~ Cancelled  
August 6, 2020  
October 8, 2020

**LPN Advisory**  
February 18, 2020  
~~April 21, 2020~~ Cancelled  
June 16, 2020  
August 18, 2020  
October 20, 2020  
December 15, 2020

**Education Advisory Committee (1)**  
**CNA advisory (1 CNA, 1 RN home health, 1 RN acute care)**

## MOVING?

Now you can change your address online!

The law requires you to inform the Board when you change addresses.

You are required, by law, to inform the Board of any address change, including a zip code change within 30 days from the date of the change. To change your address please login to your Nevada Nurse Portal account and click on "manage profile". You can also update your email address, phone number or request a name change through your Nevada Nurse Portal account.



# YOU ARE THE CHAMPIONS



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Contact: HR Director  
Humboldt General Hospital  
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almendaresd@hghospital.org  
EOE

Nevada license required. We offer competitive salary DOE; excellent benefits including Public Employees Retirement System of Nevada, group insurance benefits, accrued PTO and sick leave

- Now Hiring Clinical Nurses for the following Departments:**
- ▶ Medical/Surgical–Respiratory Care
  - ▶ Pediatric Acute Care Unit
  - ▶ Operating Room
  - ▶ Emergency Room
  - ▶ Oncology Services
  - ▶ OB Unit
- Nurse Leadership Positions:**
- ▶ Director of of Adult Care Unit (Med/Surg)
  - ▶ Director of Surgical Services
  - ▶ Lead Clinical Nurse (Med/Surg)
  - ▶ Public Health Nurse Manager

CONTACT: Byron Bizardi, HR Recruiter at (928) 283-2432 or email at Byron.Bizardi@tchealth.org

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- \$20,000 for an additional year; \$10,000 for 4+ years until all student loans are paid

For more information on how to apply, visit [cvmchospital.org](http://cvmchospital.org) or call (775) 782-1514.



Carson Valley Medical Center



University of Nevada, Reno



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### PROGRAM OFFERINGS

#### Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)

Accelerated Second-Degree BSN

Online RN-BSN

Online Master's of Science in  
Nursing (MSN)

Clinical Nurse Leader

Nurse Educator

Adult Gerontology Acute Care

Nurse Practitioner

Family Nurse Practitioner

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse  
Practitioner

Post-Master's Certificate is offered for  
all specialties and Pediatric Acute Care  
Nurse Practitioner.

#### Online Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

BSN to DNP:

Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse  
Practitioner

Family Nurse Practitioner

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse  
Practitioner

MSN to DNP:

Advanced Practice

Nurse Executive

