



ACNP POSITION PAPER

Nurse Practitioner Education

Nurse Practitioners have sustained a mutually beneficial partnership with their patients for over thirty years. Excellence in academic education and clinical training will enable Nurse Practitioners to continue to provide quality health care into the next millennium. Continuation of this excellent history of care during a proliferation of NP Education programs will be achieved through the consistent use of established program standards for NP education. Any decline in academic standards weakens the level of care provided by the NP profession and is counterproductive to the goals of the profession, the American College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP) and the goals of individual NP's. ACNP will continue to provide a leadership role that supports high quality NP education and advocates for quality, cost effective care for all clients, in all settings, and across the nation. ACNP acknowledges its national affiliate members, the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF), the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWOHNN) and the National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Reproductive Health (NANPRH) for their promulgation of NP educational standards.

It is the Position of the American College of Nurse Practitioners that:

- Access to highly educated nurse practitioners as quality providers and skilled caregivers is the right of every resident in the United States.
- Residents of the United States must have access to quality, cost effective health care services. These services must be delivered safely with an emphasis on prevention of illness and a state of complete physical, mental and social well being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
- Standards of didactic instruction and clinical practice must be based on accountability and outcome based research.
- Nurse practitioner education must be specific to area of practice.
- The Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs (NONPF, 1997) developed through the joint deliberation of the National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education comprised of many organizations should be adopted by all NP Educational Programs.
- Curricula of NP Educational Programs should be based on the Curriculum Guidelines and Programs Standards for Nurse Practitioner Education (NONPF, 1995).
- Faculty practice is essential to retain and build upon clinical excellence within nurse practitioner faculties. NP Faculty must be provided the opportunity to act as clinical preceptors, mentors and role models for NP students and new graduates.
- The active exchange of information relative to student preparation, clinical experiences and curriculum development between NP preceptors, mentors, graduate NPs and faculty of NP programs is essential for highest quality NP education

- NP students must be sufficiently experienced, academically and clinically educated, and ethically ready to assume the responsibilities of being an NP student upon entrance into the NP program.
- All undergraduate nursing education programs should continually evaluate their programs to assure the highest standards of professional nursing as a strong foundation for NP Programs, and should implement changes as indicated after review of available data and program self assessment.
- Clinical research and practice-based research for continual improvement of NP care delivery and health care delivery in process and outcomes must be supported and encouraged by NP programs of preparation.

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According to the 1992 REPORT TO CONGRESS, Division of Nursing, Health Resources & Services Administration, Public Health Services, there were 49,500 NPs.

According to the 1996 REPORT TO CONGRESS, Division of Nursing, Health Resources & Services Administration, Public Health Services, there were 63,191 NPs, 53,799 CNSs and 7,802 prepared to practice as EITHER NP or CNS.

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<http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/rnsurvey/rnss1.htm>