

## WHAT IS A NURSE PRACTITIONER?

A **Nurse Practitioner (NP)** is a registered nurse who has completed specific advanced nursing education (generally a masters' degree or doctoral degree) and training in the diagnosis and management of common as well as a few complex medical conditions. Nurse Practitioners are generally licensed through nursing boards rather than medical boards. Nurse Practitioners provide a broad range of health care services.

Nurse Practitioners treat both physical and mental conditions through comprehensive history taking, physical exams, physical therapy, ordering tests and therapies for patients, within their scope of practice. NPs can serve as a patient's "point of entry" health care provider, and see patients of all ages depending on their designated scope of practice.

In the United States, NPs are licensed by the state in which they practice, and have a national board certification (usually through the American Nurses Credentialing Center or American Academy of Nurse Practitioners).

## WHAT IS A PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT?

A **Physician assistant (PA)** is a healthcare professional licensed to practice medicine with supervision of a licensed physician. A physician assistant is concerned with preventing, maintaining, and treating human illness and injury by providing a broad range of health care services that are traditionally performed by a physician. Physician assistants conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery, and write prescriptions.

Physician assistants exercise autonomy in medical decision making as determined by their supervising physician. Physician assistants are educated in the medical model designed to complement physician training.