

# Research paper on role of nurse practitioner in primary care setting

[Sociology](#), [Population](#)



## **Introduction**

Nurse practitioners (NPs) perform a number of chores in primary care settings. The United States government has developed health care goals of 2020 that should be achieved through interactive work between healthcare practitioners, the government, and the society (Healthy People 2020, 2014). The roles of nurse practitioners range from taking care of the sick in the hospital to helping the needy in villages and homes. The main role of nurse practitioner in primary care setting includes meeting health demands for a growing population, addressing patient healthcare needs and ensuring a quality physician-led team for every patient.

One of the key roles of nurse practitioner is to meet health demands for the ever-growing population. The demand for primary care services is on the rise in U. S. and statistics show that the trend is not slowing down any sooner. The aging and growth of population calls for readiness of nurse practitioners and other health care providers to cope with the increasing number of health cases. Nurse practitioners and other healthcare professionals have the mandate of delivering primary care services to such populations in order to assist them access primary care especially the vulnerable populations. Nurse practitioners undergo extensive training that prepares them for different primary care tasks with the aim of achieving patient satisfaction and improving healthcare delivery to the society (National Governors Association, 2012).

On the other hand, regulations and policies governing the work of nurse practitioners vary across states. Some states allow nurses to work independently while others only allow their nurse practitioners to work under

the care of another practitioner. Presence of these policies interferes with the major role of nurse practitioners in primary care setting. States should ease the current scope of practice restrictions and increase compensations to sensitize and motivate nurses. The above strategy would increase output in order to increase the efficiency of nurse practitioners and ensure they fully utilize their knowledge (National Governors Association, 2012).

Nurse practitioners have a role of addressing patient healthcare needs in the current and evolving U. S. health care system. The four components making up LACE, which include Licensure, accreditation, certification, and education, define nurse practitioner scope of practice as a professional whose main goal is public protection. The US health system undergoes many challenges especially in the primary care settings because of the lack of enough health care providers to cater for the growing population. The role of nurse practitioners is not fully utilized to ensure people are health secure and stay disease-free lifestyles. Primary care nurses should ensure patient satisfaction through continuous care made possible through long-term patient-NP relationship (The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, 2011).

Additionally, nurse practitioners offer care for most healthcare needs of the patient and coordinates other health care services that go beyond their area of expertise. The rapidly changing clinical conditions characterized by technological improvement calls upon nurse practitioners to act beyond their scope in order to maintain their role in addressing current and future healthcare needs to the society. Nurse practitioners should understand that their professional competencies are not setting-specific. In the past, nurse

practitioners used to work in their specific areas of specialization, either on the hospital or primary care. Today, the type of education and training offered to nurse practitioners allow them to work across boundaries and deliver health care goals irrespective of the condition of the patient.

Examples of roles that are above the expertise of NPs include, managing patients with chronic conditions and making a follow-up of a patient treated from critical illness or complex acute (The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, 2011).

Finally, nurse practitioners have the role of ensuring a quality physician-led team for every patient. The 21st century has seen US adopting new and advanced model of primary care that revolves around patients and delivered by health care teams. In order to achieve the goals of US health care system, health care providers are called upon to improve their services in the most effective manner while ensuring proper management of resources. With the expanding role and complexity of primary care services, the health care sector calls upon advanced practice nurses to direct primary care practices between themselves, without any observation from the authority. The following role gives nurse practitioners authority to assign each other duties in primary care using an integrated, team-based approach. The above role also allows individual nurse practitioners evaluate the work of colleagues and help them whenever the need arises in order to achieve better patient outcomes. The government introduced a policy allowing nurse practitioners to work independently in order to cope with the high shortage of primary care physicians in the country (American Academy of Family Physicians, 2012).

## Conclusion

Nurse practitioners perform more roles than those discussed. Some roles such as addressing patient health needs in the present and future generations have not been fully utilized. Nurse practitioners lack the necessary knowledge and skills needed to address the present health care needs because of lack of enough facilities and equipments. The aging workforce also lacks necessary skills in using current technological gadgets creating delays in delivery of primary care services (Harrington and Heidkamp, 2013). Additionally, the high rate of discrimination practiced in US hinders full utilization of nurse practitioner roles to the society because bias of minorities. On the other hand, the government needs to expand their operations in nurse education and training. Nursing schools should be equipped with technologically advanced equipments in order to ensure nurse practitioners graduate ready to cope with prevailing health needs and those to come in the future.

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