

## Scope of practice: Education matters

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### Why education matters

Physicians are trained to lead, and the AMA stands in strong support of physician-led health care teams. 91% of patients said that a physician's years of education and training are vital to optimal patient care, especially in the event of a complication or medical emergency. Patients deserve to know who is providing their health care and the education and training of their health care professional.

Compare the education and training of physicians and nonphysicians to see why thousands of hours of rigorous education and training make physicians the most trusted and qualified to lead health care teams and why non-physicians are not a replacement for a physician. Also learn about AMA's recent advocacy efforts to secure legislative victories stopping inappropriate scope expansions.

Education matters when dealing with the unexpected.

Education matters in the event of a complication or emergency.

Education matters for the health and safety of patients.

Education matters to support access to high quality care.

Education matters to control overall health care spending.

Education matters to patients.

### Nurse practitioner (NP) vs. physician (MD or DO)



### **Length of graduate level education**

- NP: 2-4 years (online only programs allowed)
- MD or DO: 4 years

### **Years of residency/fellowship training**

- NP: Not required
- MD or DO: 3-7 years

### **Total patient care hours**

- NP: 500-720 hours
- MD or DO: 10,000-16,000 hours

### **2022 AMA advocacy in action**

- Stopped bills that would have expanded scope of practice for nurse practitioners or advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) in Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin.
- Urged physicians to contact Wisconsin Governor Evers to veto legislation that would have removed physician supervision/collaboration requirements of nurse practitioners, nurse anesthetists, clinical nurse specialists, and nurse midwives.

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## **Physician assistant (PA or PA-C) vs. physician (MD or DO)**



### **Length of graduate level education**

- PA or PA-C: 2-3 years
- MD or DO: 4 years

### **Years of residency/fellowship training**

- PA or PA-C: Not required
- MD or DO: 3-7 years

### **Total patient care hours**

- PA or PA-C: 2,000 hours
- MD or DO: 10,000-16,000 hours

### **2022 AMA advocacy in action**

- Struck down legislation allowing physician assistants to practice independently without physician oversight in Arizona, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Oklahoma and South Dakota.
  - Testified in opposition to SB 134 in South Dakota that would have allowed physician assistants to practice without any physician supervision or collaboration.
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## **Nurse anesthetist (CRNA) vs. anesthesiologist (MD or DO)**



## **Length of graduate level education**

- CRNA: 2-3 years
- MD or DO: 4 years

## **Years of residency/fellowship training**

- CRNA: Not required
- MD or DO: 4-6 years

## **Total patient care hours**

- CRNA: 2,500 hours
- MD or DO: 12,000-16,000 hours

## **2020 AMA advocacy in action**

- Successfully defeated attempt by the New Hampshire Board of Nursing to allow nurse anesthetists to use the term “nurse anesthesiologist.” Filed an amicus brief with the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) in the New Hampshire Supreme Court asking the court to uphold a New Hampshire Board of Medicine decision that only physicians licensed by the NHBOM can use the term anesthesiologist.

## **Optometrist (OD) vs. ophthalmologist (MD or DO)**





### **Length of graduate level education**

- OD: 4 years
- MD or DO: 4 years plus 1 year internship

### **Years of residency/fellowship training**

- OD: Not required
- MD or DO: 3-5 years

### **Total patient care hours**

- OD: 1-year clinical rotation
- MD or DO: 12,000-16,000 hours

### **2022 AMA advocacy in action**

- Successfully advocated for California Gov. Gavin Newsom to veto a bill that would have allowed optometrists to perform eye surgery after completing additional training.
- Defeated legislation that would have allowed optometrists to perform surgery in Alabama, Utah and Washington.
- Testified in opposition to a proposal that would expand the scope of practice of optometrists in Nebraska.

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## **Psychologist (PsyD or PhD) vs. psychiatrist (MD or DO)**



### **Length of graduate level education**

- PsyD or PhD: 3 years plus 1 year internship
- MD or DO: 4 years

### **Years of residency/fellowship training**

- PsyD or PhD: 1 year
- MD or DO: 4-6 years

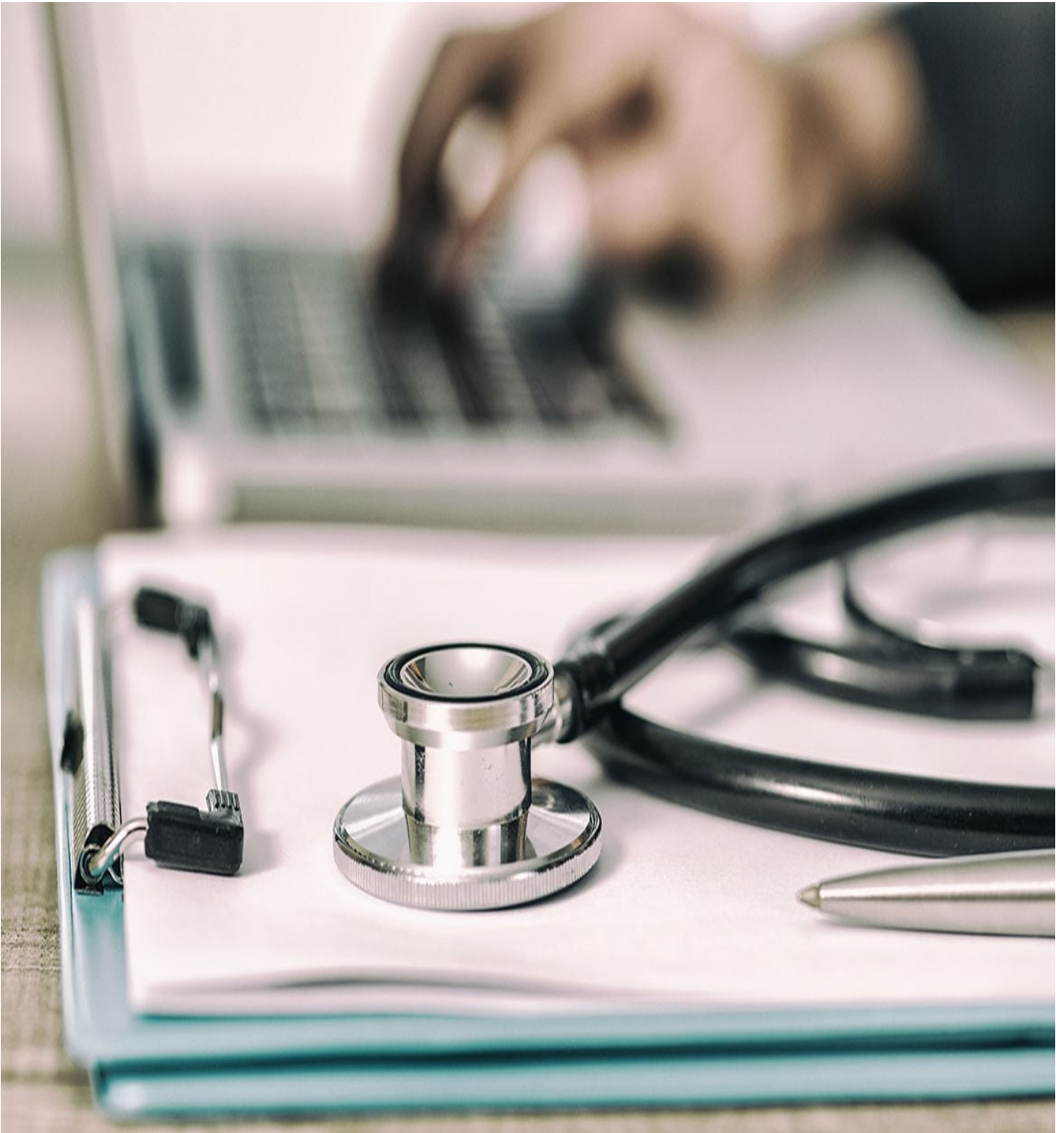
### **Total patient care hours**

- PsyD or PhD: 1-2 years (practicum and internship)
- MD or DO: 12,000-16,000 hours

### **2022 AMA advocacy in action**

- Beat psychologist-prescribing bills in Hawaii and Washington.
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## **Naturopath (ND) versus physician (MD or DO)**



### **Length of graduate level education**

- ND: 4 years
- MD or DO: 4 years

### **Years of residency/fellowship training**

- ND: not required
- MD or DO: 3-7 years

### **Total patient care hours**

- ND: 720-1,200 hours
- MD or DO: 10,000-16,000 hours

### **2022 AMA advocacy in action**

- Defeated SB 5088, which would have increased the scope of practice of naturopaths in Washington, including giving them prescriptive authority.

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Learn more about the AMA's Advocacy in Action priorities.