

# Physicians are trained to lead

With the highest level of education and **20x** the clinical training

## Physicians

4 years

3–7 years

12,000–16,000 hours

## Nurse practitioners

2–3 years

No residency

500–720 hours

## Physician education



### Physician education is ...

**Comprehensive:** Studying all aspects of the human condition—biological, chemical, pharmacological and behavioral—in the classroom, laboratory and through direct patient care

**Hands-on:** Rotating through different specialties during medical school, assisting licensed physicians

**Established and proven:** Developing clinical judgment and medical decision-making skills through direct experience managing patients in all aspects of medicine



### Physician residency is ...

**Selective and specialized:** Newly graduated physicians match into residency programs for 3–7 years of training in a select surgical or medical specialty

**Reinforcing:** Newly graduated physicians move from direct supervision to progressively increased responsibility in guided preparation for independently practicing medicine

**Accredited:** All residency programs are highly standardized and must be accredited by ACGME, with graded and progressive responsibility at the core of American graduate medical education



### Physician assessment and certification are ...

**Thorough:** Students must pass a series of exams during and following graduation from medical school, with MDs taking the USMLE and DOs taking the COMLEX

**Validating:** After completing an accredited residency and establishing licensed practice, physicians may obtain board certification in various specialties to further demonstrate their mastery of knowledge in a specific field of medicine

## Nurse practitioner education



### Nurse practitioner education is ...

**Abbreviated:** NPs can complete a master's (MSN) or doctorate degree (DNP), with the majority completing a master's degree in 2–3 years

**Limited hands-on training:** 60% of NP programs are completely or partially online

**Not standardized:** Unlike physician education and training there is no standardization for obtaining practical experience in patient care



### Nurse practitioner residency is ...

**Not required** for graduation or licensure



### Nurse practitioner assessment and certification are ...

**Inconsistent:** NPs must pass a national certifying exam in a specific area of focus (based on the type of program from which the NP graduated) but they are not required to practice in that area—meaning an NP certified in primary care can practice in cardiology, dermatology, neurology, orthopedics, and other specialties without any additional formal education or training

**Every health care professional has an important role to play in the high-stakes field of medicine. But these high stakes demand education, experience, acumen, coordination and the robust management of care found only with physician-led teams.**

## WHAT DOES THE GROWTH OF THE NURSE PRACTITIONER PROFESSION MEAN FOR PATIENT CARE?

The nurse practitioner profession is one of the fastest growing in the country, due in large part to the explosion of nurse practitioner programs.

- Many nurse practitioner programs admit **100% of applicants**.
- A majority of nurse practitioner programs are partially or fully online, meaning less in-person, hands-on instruction. In 2019 **more than 60% of NP programs were partially or fully online**.

Nurse practitioner clinical training lacks standardization ...

- To complete their **500-720 hours of clinical training**, many students must find their own preceptor. This is vastly different from the highly competitive, standardized and accredited physician residency program.
- A study found that **less than 35%** of nurse practitioner clinical training involves direct patient care.
- A survey of recent nurse practitioner graduates found that many performed **basic clinical tasks** only a minimal number of times during their training—or **sometimes not at all**.

**Currently licensed nurse practitioners as a whole have less practice experience than previous cohorts, due in part to the increase in direct-entry nurse practitioner programs.**

**In 2022, 47.2% of nurse practitioners had five or fewer years of experience, of which 13.1% had less than one year of experience.**

Fewer nurse practitioners are practicing in primary care and more are working in specialties. Nurse practitioner certification does not always align with the specialty in which they are practicing.

- While approximately **90%** of nurse practitioners **are certified in primary care**, only **38% actually practice in primary care**.
- Nurse practitioners commonly enter specialty fields, however, **87.7% have no additional specialty certification**.

**Malpractice claims: In a report by a leading insurer, medical malpractice claims against nurse practitioners increased by more than 10.5% from 2017 to 2022 with a greater percentage of claims exceeding \$500K. Nurse practitioner owned practices had the highest average of total incurred claims; death was the most common injury noted in the claims.**

**While the number of nurse practitioners has increased across the country, they continue to practice in the same areas of the state as physicians. This occurs regardless of state scope of practice laws.**