

# Why Practices Should Consider Hiring PAs/NPs

*Written by medmonthly on April 1, 2016 in Features*

Increasing productivity, maximizing reimbursements and enhancing patient experience and satisfaction are big challenges that individual practices constantly face. While healthcare access and delivery across communities and populations are improving, physicians are finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with the swelling patient volumes without compromising consistency and level of quality in healthcare delivery. This specific challenge can be met by hiring physician assistants and/or nurse practitioners. Most healthcare practices in fact can effectively improve on the level of care provided and efficiently address the challenges of increasing patient volume without diluting practice success rate by adding a nurse practitioner or physician assistant to their practice.

Non-physician practitioners (NPPs) such as nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs) can prove to be great assets to a practice. Not only can they carry out majority of the tasks that physicians perform, but they can also ensure that the quality of care is consistent. Furthermore, NPPs are usually hired at considerably lower salaries compared to a physician, which means they are cost-effective additions to any practice.

## ***The Role of PAs and NPs in the Healthcare Delivery System***

There are two specific reasons why PAs and NPs will make an impact in the healthcare system. Firstly, they have the necessary training to efficiently undertake a number of tasks associated with diagnosing and treating illness.

Secondly, while physicians need around eight years of education and training, NPs and PAs can enter the healthcare system after undergoing two to three years of advanced training.

Trained and experienced NPs and PAs can carry out important physician responsibilities that include conducting physical examinations, diagnosing and treating conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure, writing of prescriptions and ordering diagnostic tests, as well as educating patients on health and lifestyle choices.

According to the [American Association of Medical Colleges \(AAMC\)](#), by 2020 the U.S. will face a shortage of over 90,000 physicians and by 2025 this figure is expected to rise well over 130,000. Physician shortages will impact both primary and specialty care. The [Health Resources and Services Administration \(HRSA\)](#) predicts that shortage of dentists is going to double in the next 10 years and 15,600 full-time equivalent dentists will be required to meet the demand for oral care. Also, as the number of insured Americans under the Affordable Care Act increases, patient volumes will continue to expand. There is also a crucial need for greater healthcare delivery in rural and underserved communities. The inclusion of PAs and NPs in the system can therefore help increase healthcare access among the more vulnerable and needy sections of the population.

Are PAs and NPs on par with physicians? Definitely not. However, given the above scenario, the integration of NPs and PAs in the healthcare sector will prove to be an important move as a way of alleviating the looming physician shortage crisis at least to a certain extent.



## WHY YOUR PRACTICE SHOULD CONSIDER HIRING PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS/NURSE PRACTITIONERS

### PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE IN THE U.S. AN ACUTE SITUATION



➔ According to the **American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC)**, by **2020** the **U.S.** will face a physician shortage of over **90,000 PHYSICIANS.**



➔ This figure is expected to rise well over **130,000** by 2025.



➔ Both primary and specialty care will face **PHYSICIAN SHORTAGES.**



➔ Shortage of primary care physicians by 2025 will be in the range of **12,500-31,100.**



➔ According to the **Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)**, shortage of **DENTISTS** is going to double in the **next 10 years** and **15,600** full-time equivalent **DENTISTS** will be required to meet the demand for oral care.



### PAs and NPs: AN EFFECTIVE SOLUTION TO ADDRESS DENTAL HEALTH CARE CHALLENGES



- ➔ Close to **108 million Americans do not have dental insurance.**
- ➔ **Adults are not included** in the Affordable Care Act dental requirements.
- ➔ **ORAL HEALTH** reach is a big area of concern especially among the under-served populations as most do not have fast and easy access to a provider, or because they are not in a position to pay for care and also because they are lacking in **oral health literacy.**



➔ The use of **NPs** and **PAs** can effectively reduce the projected **DENTIST** shortage as well as increase oral health delivery and reach if they are effectively integrated into the delivery system.



➔ **PAs** and **NPs** can effectively help shoulder several tasks and responsibilities of a dentist while also enhancing patient care as they can take care of routine **ORAL EXAMS**, write prescriptions, order diagnostic tests, as well as educate patients on positive oral health choices.

## ***Benefits of Hiring PAs and NPs for a Practice***

The training that PAs undergo is modeled to be similar to the kind of training that physicians undergo. The approach to healthcare is from the perspective of studying of disease and administering treatment. NPs on the other-hand train under a model that takes on a more holistic view of treatment and here the primary focus is on health-promotion. The level of engagement between a patient and NP is more comprehensive as the NP engages with a patient both on a medical and social level. For a healthcare practice the benefits of hiring a PA or an NP are numerous. Here are top four considerations.

**Lower salary expenses of PAs and NPs** – compared to that of a physician is perhaps one of the most basic and important benefits to a practice.

**Lower overhead costs** – associated with PAs as compared to a physician is another area where individual practices can benefit. The cost for support staff, medical resources, rent as well as phone coverage among other variable costs are considerably lower for a PA compared to that of a physician.

**Addressing increase in patient volume** – is a big challenge for most individual practices. By hiring a PA or adding an NP, practices can effectively meet the increase in patient volume which in turn can have a positive impact on the practice's bottom line.

**Insurance and liability costs** – are much lower for PAs and NPs when compared to that of a physician. Lowered liability risk cost and malpractice claims as well as lower costs per claim associated with PAs and NPs are a big benefit for individual practices that otherwise cannot afford to get tangled in high risk, high cost liability and malpractice claims.

### ***Conclusion***

The healthcare system today is moving towards a patient-centric model of care. And patient satisfaction is becoming a crucial determinant in the success quotient of a practice. In such a scenario, PAs and NPs can prove to be valuable resources for individual practices that want to improve patient care and their bottom line. Trained and experienced to perform almost all tasks as physicians, PAs and NPs can easily add to the level of patient care and help optimize and expand the practice.

#### ***About the Author:***

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