



spotlight on health care

Nurse Practitioners: Your Partners In Health

(NAPSA)—Webster's Dictionary defines "partner" as "one who is associated with another in a shared activity." When that shared activity is maintaining your good health and promoting a healthy lifestyle for you, your family and community, many experts believe that a nurse practitioner (NP) is the best partner you can have.

NPs empower patients to maintain and improve their health by providing both comprehensive healthcare and health counseling. Through prevention and promotion, they treat the whole person—not just the ailment.

How NPs Work

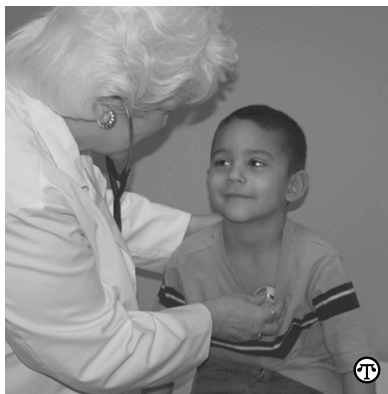
Nurse practitioners practice according to their specialty and provide a unique blend of nursing and medical services to individuals, families and groups. In addition to diagnosing and managing illness, NPs emphasize health promotion and disease prevention. As a partner in health, they aid in overall health maintenance.

Teaching and counseling individuals, families and groups are important parts of NP practice. These professionals practice individually and in collaboration with other healthcare providers. Nurse practitioners also conduct extensive research and are healthcare consultants and patient advocates.

What NPs Do

As a consumer of healthcare services, you and your family should know that:

- On average, NPs spend 31 percent more time with patients than do physicians.
- Patients with an NP primary-care provider have a lower rate of emergency room admis-



YOUR GOOD HEALTH is maintained when you get the right care and information.

sions and a lower average hospital length of stay.

- NPs are more likely to suggest therapeutic approaches that reduce healthcare costs.
- NPs counsel patients on promoting health and preventing disease, which reduces healthcare costs.
- NPs provide patients with the information necessary to make healthy lifestyle choices and educated healthcare decisions.

How NPs Got Started

A primary care physician shortage in the 1960s created an optimal environment for a change in nursing. Over the past 40 years the role of the NP has grown and now members of this dedicated group of healthcare professionals, more than 106,000 strong in the United States alone, are expert providers of primary and specialty care.

For more information or to locate a nurse practitioner in your area, contact the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) at 512-442-4262.