

Building Health Care Workforce Capacity

Advancing health care access, affordability, and quality through primary care

As the health care system in the United States increasingly serves a larger, older, and more medically complex population, demand for primary care will continue to increase over time. However, today, nearly one-in-five residents (62 million individuals) live in an area with a shortage of primary care providers. The U.S. is projected to experience a shortage of up to 120,000 physicians by 2030, which includes a shortfall of between 20,000 and 55,000 primary care physicians.

Advanced Care Practitioners (ACPs) – Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Physician Assistants (PAs), and Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs) – are providing effective primary care and demonstrating equal or better outcomes than physicians for certain clinical and patient experience measures. Broader deployment of ACPs in primary care will improve patient outcomes and the care experience, and increase efficient use of health care resources.

Solutions to help bolster a primary care workforce capable of advancing high-quality, affordable, and convenient health care should:

Increase ACP Workforce Capabilities in the United States

- Eliminate scope of-practice barriers for NPs and enact uniform Nurse Practice Acts to expand the reach of NPs into primary care settings.
- Revise State Medicaid regulations to recognize NPs as primary care providers in managed care networks.
- Expand Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement for telehealth and recognize telehealth as a standard delivery modality for ACPs.
- Incentivize increased utilization of urgent care centers and retail health clinics that leverage ACPs.

Enable Opportunities for ACP Workforce Development

- Increase Federal financial support for an additional 3,000 new ACP residency positions each year over the next five years.
- Provide Federal education grants to increase nursing faculty in select geographies to address local workforce shortages.
- Incentivize the creation of ACP “Ambulatory Care” clinical rotations to advance teaching in lower cost settings of care.
- Provide Federal funding to Ambulatory Care facilities and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) that create clinical rotation programs for ACPs in primary care and behavioral health.



Annually 16,000 NPs
graduate and begin practicing primary
care, versus 4,000 physicians



Approximately 85%
of NPs practice primary care



**28% of men and
17% of women**
do not have a primary care doctor