



The Role of the Advanced Practice Nurse in the Management of Rheumatic Disease

The role of the advanced practice nurse is to provide preventative care, treatment, and management of acute and chronic illnesses using advanced clinical skills, diagnostic reasoning, and advanced therapeutic interventions. APNs demonstrate a high level of independence and clinical expertise in the management of rheumatic diseases. APNs integrate education, research, management, leadership, and consultation into their clinical roles.

What Does the Advanced Practice Nurse Do?

The APN assesses patients' health status through comprehensive health histories, physical examinations, and interpretation of diagnostic tests. The APN formulates patient diagnoses and with the patient identifies outcomes in order to manage health problems, maximize functional abilities, prevent or minimize disabilities, and promote health maintenance. Collaborating with the patient and family, and other health care professionals as needed, the APN develops an appropriate plan of care to attain individualized expected outcomes, prioritizing multiple needs.

The APN prescribes, orders, and implements interventions and treatments identified in the plan of care, including: prescribing pharmacologic and non pharmacologic interventions, in accordance with state law; providing patient/family education and counseling; and, initiating referrals to other health care providers.

The APN evaluates and documents patient/family progress toward attainment of expected outcomes and provides consultation to other providers to optimize the plan of care and affect system change. The APN provides comprehensive clinical coordination and case management and acts as an advocate for the patient and family within the health care facility, the community, and the legislative arena. The APN may be involved in program planning, validation and research.

Where Does the Advanced Practice Nurse Work?

The APN provides care in a variety of health care settings including hospital units, ambulatory clinics, managed care practice, private practice, rehabilitation centers, home health agencies, public health centers, and long-term care facilities. APNs may serve as primary care providers, specialty care providers, or consultants.

What Kind of Training Does the Advanced Practice Nurse Have?

APN is an umbrella term given to a registered nurse who has met advanced educational and clinical practice requirements beyond that for basic registered nurse licensure. There are four types of APNs: clinical nurse specialists, nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, and certified registered nurse anesthetists. APN education occurs at the graduate level (master's or doctorate) and builds upon undergraduate RN education. APN curriculum contains courses in advanced health assessment, physiology, advanced pathophysiology, pharmacology, advanced therapeutics and specialty preparation, as well as research methodology and utilization. Regulated by both state and federal laws, APNs are



licensed as registered nurses in the states in which they practice. Most states require APNs to be nationally certified in their specialty area by the APN specialty's professional organization. National APN certification requires graduation from an accredited APN educational program and successful completion of a national certification examination.

Rheumatologists and rheumatology health professionals

Learn more about [rheumatologists](#) and [rheumatology health professionals](#).

To find a rheumatologist or rheumatology health professional

For a listing of rheumatologists and rheumatology health professionals in your area, [click here](#).

For more information

For additional information, contact the Association of Rheumatology Health Professionals at 2200 Lake Boulevard, Atlanta, Georgia 30319 or (404) 633-3777 or arhp@rheumatology.org.

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