

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A Nurse Practitioner?

When coming to the Elliot Health System to receive quality, individualized medical care, you may meet a Nurse Practitioner or NP. Our Nurse Practitioners provide care in many settings, ranging from our primary care offices to our specialty clinics. It is important to us that you have a good understanding of the education, qualifications

and competence of the NPs providing your health care. Nurse practitioners are advanced practice registered nurses, also referred to as APRN's. Our educational preparation is beyond the educational preparation of a Registered Nurse. Most Nurse Practitioners have been registered nurses for years before advancing our education through a masters or doctorate level education.

Nurse practitioners have provided healthcare to patients for more than 45 years. In 1965, Nurse Loretta Ford and pediatrician Dr. Henry Silver developed the first Nurse Practitioner program at the University of Colorado. This role was created in response to a shortage of physicians at that time. In 1967, Boston College created one of the first NP Masters programs, expanding the educational requirements. In 1968, Massachusetts General Hospital also established a NP program. By 1973, more than 65 programs existed in the US.

The education of the Nurse Practitioner builds on the solid foundation of patient care taught as part of foundational nursing education. This advanced practice

education teaches , NP's to integrate knowledge in order to properly assess, diagnose and treat patients. NPs in NH are licensed to practice independently, and collaborate with other health care providers to create a health care team dedicated to your health. NPs use a comprehensive approach to health care and emphasize the overall health and wellness of patients of all ages. Nurse Practitioners will spend time with you, listening to your concerns and goals. We will take your health history, conduct thorough physical examinations and interpret laboratory and x-ray results to diagnose and treat your acute and chronic problems. NPs prescribe and manage medications and other therapies, provide health teaching and refer to other health professionals when needed. Nurse Practitioners focus on preventative care and will assist you in making choices to improve your health. We understand the challenges faced by many patients everyday and strive to assist you in living to your healthiest potential.

It is projected that implementation of the Affordable Care Act will increase our need for healthcare providers in the future. The need for more healthcare providers can be met by the competent and compassionate care provided by Nurse Practitioners, providing high quality and cost effective care to patients, families and communities.

There are over 100 Nurse Practitioners currently working in the Elliot Healthcare System. We look forward to being caring, compassionate and competent members of your health care team.