

ABNF

Policy Brief



The Association of Black Nursing Faculty (ABNF)

- Professional Development
- Encouragement
- Support
- Communication

The mission of ABNF is to address health issues of concern to the Black community through the scholarly activities of the Black Nursing Professoriate

Endorsement of Advanced Practice Nurses as Independent Practitioners

Policy Statement

The Association of Black Nursing Faculty (ABNF) strongly advocates for the autonomous practice and recognition of Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) as independent care providers by all local, state, and federal healthcare agencies and third party payors nationwide.

APN Education and Specialization

Educated at the graduate level, APNs are well prepared registered nurses, who hold master's and doctoral degrees in their respective areas of specialization. There are currently four categories of APNs:

1. **nurse practitioners**, prepared at the master's or doctoral level, provide chronic and acute care services in a variety of health care settings across the continuum of care delivery in primary, secondary and tertiary care areas;
2. **clinical nurse specialists**, prepared at the master's or doctoral level, provide clinical expertise in working with other nurses in the management of patient care, using system-wide approaches to care management;
3. **certified nurse midwives**, prepared at the master's and doctoral levels, provide prenatal, antenatal, postpartal and gynecological care in hospitals, birthing centers, homes and clinics; and,
4. **certified registered nurse anesthetist**, prepared at the master's and doctoral levels, provide peri-operative, intraoperative and post operative care in acute, sub-acute and clinic settings.

Certification, Scope of Practice, Privileging and Credentialing

In addition to holding advanced degrees, each of the nurses in the categories listed

above are required to hold national board certification, which must be renewed every 3 to 5 years depending on area of specialization. Additionally, at the state level, individual Boards of Nursing and Medicine determine the scope of practice, which is regulated by law. Further, at the local level each facility maintains its own process for privileging and credentialing based on department policies and agreements, to ensure a high quality standard of care across all disciplines.

The Health Care and Education Affordability Act of 2010

With the recent passage of the healthcare reform bill, given the limited numbers of medical physicians in primary care practices, clearly there is an insufficient number of care providers that will be needed to meet the demand, when the vast majority of Americans will hold health insurance. To date, in those states that permit APNs to bill for third party reimbursement, to prescribe pharmaceutical agents, and to practice independently, studies have demonstrated the cost effectiveness of this level of practitioner.

Autonomous Practice

Many states require the supervision of APNs by medical physicians. This duplication of service is a very inefficient model of care delivery. APNs are taught to focus on disease prevention and health promotion models of care, concepts that form the basis of APN education. In addition to advanced health assessment, pathophysiology, and pharmacology, subject matter related to nutrition, exercise, patient teaching, complementary therapies, and psychosocial interventions are curricular threads integrated throughout advanced practice nursing programs of study. With the major shift in health care from disease management to health promotion interventional strategies, APNs are well positioned to implement this newer focus, as experts. Further, studies



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have shown that when APN outcomes of care are compared with the outcomes of their physician colleagues, APN practice is comparable and in some cases exceeds that of the care delivered by medical residents.

Recommendations

For all of the reasons cited above, ABNF advocates for the independent and autonomous practice of APNs to improve access to care, as greater numbers of Americans acquire health insurance coverage. Further, ABNF calls for the eligibility of APNs for direct reimbursement and incentives under all pay for quality plans.

ABNF supports measures to address the Institute of Medicine's call for patient-centered, interdisciplinary teams of health care providers, who will implement quality improvement strategies, enhance the utilization of information technologies, and promote evidence-based practice.

ABNF joins with other nursing organizations in the movement toward making the doctor of nursing practice credential the terminal degree for all advanced practice roles by 2015.

ABNF applauds the efforts of the Obama Administration in its endeavor to address the critical nursing shortage through the reauthorization of Title VIII Workforce Development Programs, and through the allocation of Graduate Medical Education monies to support graduate nursing education.

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