



A GUIDE FOR NURSES

# Becoming an FNP



*GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY*  
School of Nursing & Health Studies



Becoming a family nurse practitioner can lead to greater professional autonomy and a wider range of roles and opportunities.

## INTRODUCTION

A Master of Science degree in Nursing affords bachelor's-prepared registered nurses (RNs) the opportunity to broaden their scope of practice as advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs). APRNs assess, diagnose, order tests, prescribe medications, and manage patient problems. According to the APRN Consensus Model, certified nurse-midwives (CNMs), certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), clinical nurse specialists (CNSs), and certified nurse practitioners (CNPs) classify as APRN roles. Family nurse practitioners (FNPs) are certified nurse practitioners who focus on the family unit and individuals belonging to the family. FNPs provide a diverse range of health care services for patients in all age groups.

Transitioning from Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) to FNP can lead to greater professional autonomy and a wider range of roles and challenges, especially with new federal health care laws creating a growing need for primary care providers.

This guide focuses on family nurse practitioners and the transition from BSN to FNP.

# THE ROLE OF FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONERS

According to the [American Association of Colleges of Nursing \(AACN\)](#), a family nurse practitioner is a clinician who combines clinical expertise in the diagnoses and treatment of health conditions with an emphasis on values-based health management and disease prevention.

FNPs provide comprehensive primary health care services, including:

- Assessing all aspects of a patient's health for purposes of health promotion and disease prevention
- Using evidence-based clinical practice guidelines for screening activities
- Providing guidance to address environmental, lifestyle, and developmental issues
- Identifying symptoms of physical and mental illness across the life span
- Ordering, performing, and interpreting diagnostic tests
- Analyzing and synthesizing collected data and formulating comprehensive diagnoses
- Planning and implementing therapeutic interventions to stabilize the patient, minimize complications, and improve outcomes



The [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\)](#) lists the following job markets as employing the greatest numbers of nurse practitioners in 2012:

Primary care offices

General medical and surgical hospitals

Outpatient care centers

Colleges, universities, and professional schools

Home health care services

## THE NEED FOR FNPs

With an aging population and the prospect of 32 million uninsured Americans gaining access to health care coverage as the result of new federal health regulations, many hospitals and health care organizations are turning to FNPs for primary care.

According to the American Hospital Association (AHA), there are already many settings, especially in rural areas, where a nurse practitioner is a patient's primary health care provider. An FNP's ability to independently examine patients, make assessments, order diagnostic tests, and prescribe treatments allows them to provide direct health care services in a variety of primary care settings, including general and specialty practices.

## CAREERS FOR FNPs

According to the [American Association of Nurse Practitioners \(AANP\)](#), there are currently about 189,000 nurse practitioners working throughout the nation. Nearly half of these are FNPs who work on their own or as members of health care teams. FNPs are able to work in a wide range of settings. Employers include private practices, hospitals, urgent care centers, health maintenance organizations (HMOs), long-term care facilities, veterans' facilities, community clinics, schools, and correctional facilities. FNPs practice in rural, suburban, and urban communities and often provide care for underserved multicultural populations.

## COMPENSATION

An FNP's education, area of specialization, and certifications play an important role in determining their total compensation and benefits. Salaries vary according to employer and geographic location. According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\) salary data](#), the average annual wage for nurse practitioners was \$89,960 in 2012, with the top 25 percent of earners making more than \$106,510 annually. For more information about nursing salaries and state board certifications, visit the [Nursing License Map](#).



NP competencies for family/  
across the lifespan include:

- Scientific foundation
- Leadership
- Quality
- Practice inquiry
- Technology and information literacy
- Policy
- Health delivery system
- Ethics
- Independent practice

**To Learn More**

See [Population-Focused Nurse Practitioner Competencies](#) developed by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN).

## FNP PROGRAMS

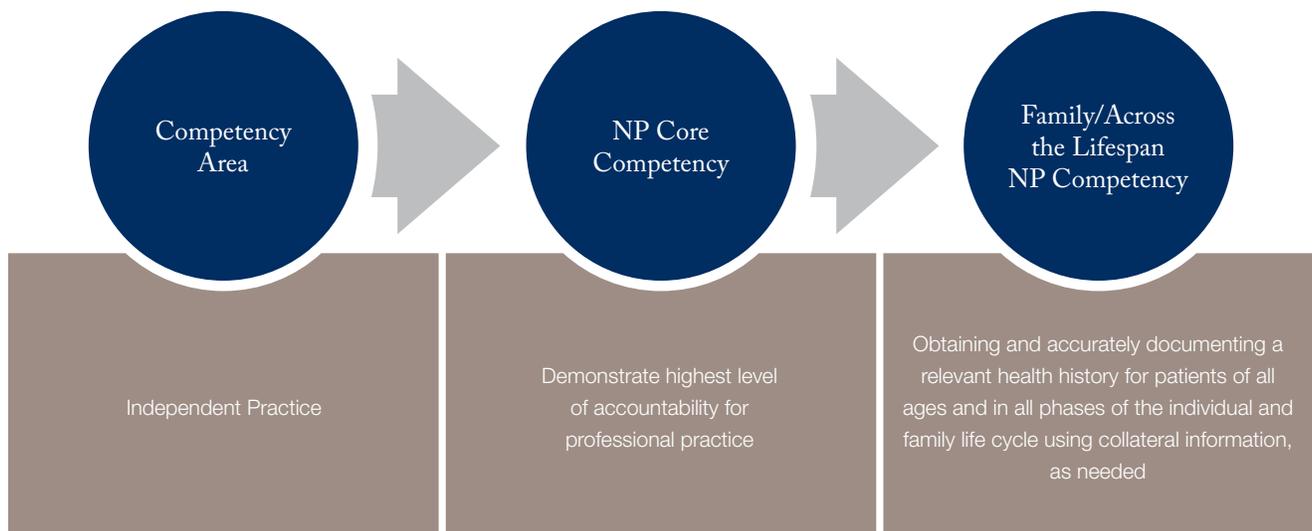
When researching an NP program, it is important to consider NP core and population-specific competencies. The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) developed [these guidelines](#) to ensure consistent entry-level competencies for all nurse practitioners.

Each NP is expected to meet both the core competencies and the population-focused competencies through didactic and clinical preparation. NP educational programs use both NP core competencies and population-focused competencies to guide curriculum development. Programs that clearly address these competencies will best prepare you as an entry-level nurse practitioner.



**Example:** Independent practice is one of the competency areas for NP program graduates. One of the core competencies contributing to independent practice is demonstrating the highest level of accountability for professional practice.

According to NONPF and the AACN, one way that family nurse practitioners perform this competency is by obtaining and accurately documenting a relevant health history for patients of all ages and in all phases of the individual and family life cycle using collateral information, as needed. Since FNPs work with individuals and families across the life cycle, their independent practice requires that skill. As you consider which FNP program is right for you, think about how the curriculum will prepare you to demonstrate competency upon completion of program requirements.





## WHY GEORGETOWN?

With a values-based approach and a long tradition of preparing leaders to improve the health and well being of all people, [Georgetown University School of Nursing & Health Studies \(NHS\)](#) is uniquely positioned to educate family nurse practitioners. NHS offers a vibrant academic community with a deep commitment to social justice. Through innovative teaching, research, scholarship, and service, NHS remains committed to seven core values.



One of the leading academic institutions in the world, NHS prepares nurse practitioners to become effective leaders and make a difference in the world. [Learn more](#) about the didactic, clinical, and professional components of Georgetown University's online Family Nurse Practitioner program.