



Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners – Uniquely Qualified Mental Health Care Providers

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (PMHNP) diagnose and treat mental illness. More importantly, PMHNPs take the time to partner with patients to help them achieve their own goals, focusing on holistic, personalized mental health care.

In Washington State, PMHNPs work autonomously (without the supervision of a medical doctor) and have full prescription authority. PMHNPs:

- **Assess, diagnose, and treat** psychiatric and other mental health disorders.
 - Order and interpret diagnostic studies such as lab-work.
 - Provide psychotherapy for individuals, groups & families.
 - Prescribe and manage medications and monitor their effects.
- **Integrate biological, psychological, social, and spiritual elements** to treat the whole person.
 - Coordinate patient care and provide case management.
 - Collaborate with doctors and other health professionals.
 - Teach patients how to manage their mental health and improve their overall health.
- **Design and conduct research** to improve mental health care.

PMHNPs can provide direct patient care in a variety of settings:

- Hospitals
- Outpatient facilities
- Community clinics
- Schools and universities
- Private practice

Many accept private insurance, HMOs, PPOs, Medicare, and Medicaid. PMHNPs can also provide education and consultation services to nurses and other mental health professionals.

PMHNPs must hold either Master or Doctoral degrees in psychiatric mental health nursing. Their education includes research, systems leadership, and direct patient care skills.

PMHNPs must be licensed by Washington State Department of Health as Advanced Practice Nurse Practitioners (ARNPs). They are also certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). To maintain their professional license and ANCC credentials, PMHNPs continually enhance their expertise through continuing education.



The Need for PMHNPs in Washington State

One in every five Americans has suffered or will suffer from mental illness. The shortage of mental health providers in our state is a significant problem as community health, rural counties, and underserved communities struggle to find qualified mental health providers. The social, economic, and insurance environment has led to a criticality of this deficit in practitioner supply—even those who carry insurance often cannot find care.

Psychiatric nursing is widely recognized as an effective mental health treatment. Nursing—consistently rated by the public as the most honest, ethical profession—treats the whole patient, not just a set of symptoms. Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (PMHNP) integrate biological, psychological, social, and spiritual elements to treat the whole person.

This nursing model of integrated and holistic care is essential in meeting our community's mental health treatment needs.

AAPPN provides support for the profession and serves as a resource for policy-makers

The Association of Advance Practice Psychiatric Nurses (AAPPN) is Washington State's professional home for advanced practice psychiatric nurses. With more than 200 members—from Bellingham to Richland, from Vancouver to Spokane—AAPPN is the only organization specifically dedicated to the profession in our state. Our clinical members work in community clinics, higher education, hospitals, and private practice, and our student members attend Masters and DNP programs throughout the state.

Washington State is home to the most independent and progressive scope of practice for PHMNs. AAPPN promotes excellence in the profession by providing education, networking, and professional growth opportunities. By supporting the profession, AAPPN joins our state's leaders in striving for the highest quality mental health care for our citizens.

AAPPN is proud to provide assistance to legislators, agencies, and other policy-makers in our state. We invite you to contact us at 360-734-3166 or office@aappn.org if we can ever be of service in providing expertise about mental health care issues.