

# Presence of nurse practitioners growing in primary care

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(HealthDay)—Nurse practitioners (NPs) are a growing segment of the

primary care workforce, according to a study published in the June issue of *Health Affairs*.

Hilary Barnes, Ph.D., from the University of Delaware in Newark, and colleagues assessed trends in NP presence in primary care practices and how state policies such as scope-of-[practice](#) laws and expansion of eligibility for Medicaid may encourage or inhibit the use of NPs.

The researchers found an increasing NP presence in both rural and non-rural primary care practices from 2008 to 2016. By 2016, NPs comprised 25.2 percent of providers in rural practices and 23.0 percent in non-rural practices versus 17.6 and 15.9 percent, respectively, in 2008. The highest NP presence was seen in states with full scope-of-practice laws. Yet, the fastest growth occurred in [states](#) with reduced and restricted scopes of practice. Greater NP presence was not tied to state Medicaid expansion status.

"Overall, primary care practices are embracing interdisciplinary provider configurations, and including NPs as providers can strengthen health care delivery," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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