

Pediatric nurse practitioner shortage looming

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(HealthDay)—There is a looming critical shortage of pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs), according to a white paper published in the May-June issue of the *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*.

Kristin Hittle Gigli, Ph.D., R.N., from the University of Pittsburgh, and colleagues highlight the roles of PNPs in the care of children, synthesize

what is known about the PNP workforce, and explain the value of PNPs as members of interdisciplinary care teams.

The authors report that the supply of PNPs has not grown as considerably as other nurse practitioner subspecialties. PNPs account for less than 8 percent of the 270,000 U.S. nurse practitioners. It is estimated that 1,025 PNPs are licensed each year, and the total current workforce is approximately 18,100. The authors recommend research in the following areas to ensure an adequate workforce of PNPs for the future: analysis of the PNP workforce for adequacy in size, type of skills needed for primary, acute, and specialty practices, and [geographic distribution](#); evaluation of direct clinical and indirect patient care provided by PNPs; effects of PNPs practicing without barriers; and understanding of challenges in recruitment and retention of PNPs in [clinical practice](#) and academic programs. Furthermore, the authors call for federal and institutional organizational change that encourages all PNPs to bill for services under their own unique national provider identification number and share/split billing in acute care settings.

"This paper can support PNPs in advocating for their clinical practice and professional development, help health care administrators understand the role of specialized PNPs, promote the wise council of advanced practice registered nurse faculty when students are enrolling in graduate nursing [education programs](#), and encourage researchers and [policy makers](#) to undertake studies on the state of the pediatric workforce," the authors write.

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