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Supporting an Advanced Practice Provider (APP) Residency Program

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Advanced Practice Providers (APPs)

Advanced Practice Providers (APPs) include Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists and Certified Nurse Midwives. These professional roles developed over the last 60 years in response to the growing complexity of clinical care - from ambulatory to surgical to acute care settings.



APPs make up 40% of the medical staff, practicing in every service line and department. They support the academic, clinical and research missions of Maine Medical Center.

From Onboarding to Residency: APP Education

APPs have traditionally experienced a standard hospital orientation process. NPs and PAs have not received the additional support needed by a provider. While considered members of the medical staff, APPs were not on the same onboarding track as other providers. Training occurred primarily within a single department with little connection to fellow APPs across services lines.

Insufficient staff onboarding leads to staff dissatisfaction, inefficiencies and even poor patient care. When a hospital makes the effort to fully prepare new APPs, they become vested in the organization and grow into high performing providers.

In recent years, postgraduate programs have been offered in place of standard orientation. The residency model provides a structure for developing clinical competency through didactics, interprofessional engagement, research and scholarly activity.

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Angela Leclerc, MSPA, PA-C, Program Director

Critical Care APP Residency at Maine Medical Center

The Critical Care APP program was launched through the leadership of Angie Leclerc, MSPA, PA-C and Dr. Patti Lerwick.

Administrative support is provided by the Department of Medical Education - Graduate Medical Education team.

The program includes three dedicated faculty members. The first cohort includes two learners: one NP and one PA.

The program provides newly-graduated APPs with:

- Formal critical care curriculum and assessments
- Critical care simulation, didactic and inter-professional learning opportunities



Angela Leclerc, MSPA, PA-C
Program Director



Patricia Lerwick, MD
Medical Director

APP Residency

There are four core rotations:

- Critical Care Medicine
- Neurocritical Care
- Surgical Critical Care
- Cardiovascular Critical Care

All rotations include:

- Formal didactics
- Ultrasound training
- Simulation
- Research and formal evaluations



APP residency programs may be accredited or recognized by NP or PA governance. The path to accreditation is unusual: while medical residencies anticipate an administrative year to establish programs, the APP residency is launched to “fly as you build it”.

The Association of Postgraduate PA Programs and the National Nurse Practitioner Residency and Fellowship Consortium are two accrediting bodies.

Library Support

The MMC Library provided the first didactic session in the residency on information literacy and research. Topics included the value of peer review and the editorial process and the risks and benefits of open access publishing.

Information resources for planning and curriculum development include:

Books:

- Research for Advanced Practice Nurses (2022)
- Ballweg’s Physician Assistant (2021)

Journals:

- JAAPA
- Journal of Physician Assistant Education
- Journal for Nurse Practitioners
- Journal of Nursing Administration
- Nurse Educator



Further Challenges

APPs are disadvantaged by an unclear position within hospital administration. As providers, as hospital employees, and as medical staff, APPs are often seen as neither fish nor fowl. PAs and NPs also travel distinct educational tracks, but become virtually indistinguishable in practice. Professional governance of APPs and accreditation of their postgraduate programs is divided as well, making coordination of education initiatives more challenging.

These structural difficulties belie the overall need for APPs to receive more intensive preparation for their roles as clinical providers. Specialization for these advanced practice providers - critical care, orthopedics, psychiatry - is essential to their development as professionals. By aligning efforts and working together, APPs can be better prepared through residency to provide care.

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