The gap between physician shortage vs. demand grows...

- Physician supply
- Physician shortage
- Physician demand
- Physician assistants
- Physician shortage

There's a growing shortage of physicians that's only expected to get worse after full implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The Association of American Medical Colleges anticipates that the shortage in all specialties will grow from 70,000 in 2008 to 130,000 by 2025 (65,800 in primary care alone).

...but patient-centered medical homes are filling that gap. Patient-centered medical homes have experienced rapid growth in recent years, and they are expected to continue to grow at an even faster rate in the coming years.

Some experts advocate for the increased use of physician assistants and nurse practitioners to help relieve the physician shortage. These clinicians can perform some of the same tasks as physicians, such as diagnosing and treating minor ailments, managing chronic conditions, and prescribing medications.

Physicians, have expressed skepticism about overusing NPs, particularly to replace the primary care physician. Advocates, however, argue that NPs and PAs can provide high-quality care and improve access to care for patients in underserved areas.
There's a growing shortage of physicians that's only expected to get worse after full implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The RAND Corp., a nonprofit focused on research and analysis, predicts that if patient-centered medical homes, which will increase the number of patients they serve using NPs and PAs, it will help to relieve the physician shortage. Some experts advocate for the increased use of physician assistants (PAs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) to help fill the gap. The RAND study found that medical homes use 20 percent more NPs per doctor, and a Medical Group Management Association report found that new models of care have increased the number of new PA graduates fast enough to relieve the shortage.

The Affordable Care Act, which invests in better primary care, is well-suited for and understands very well, says Tricia Thompson, CEO of the American Organization of Nurse Practitioners. “Part of respect is not bringing us in to do something that really does not take a nurse practitioner to handle.”

Some groups, such as the American Academy of Family Physicians, have expressed reservations about expanding NPs’ and PAs’ authority, particularly to replace primary care physicians. Advocates, however, say that the new models of care are proving their worth. A report by the American Board of Internal Medicine found that NPs and PAs provide more access, in a variety of different settings.

Physicians, have expressed skepticism about overusing NPs, particularly in some areas where it can be harder to recruit physicians, such as rural areas. Some experts have recommended strategies to attract and retain such providers, such as higher salaries. The American Association of Retired Persons, the American Medical College, and the American Association of Medical Colleges, among others, have offered new models of care that will nurse practitioners and physician assistants fill the gaps.
There’s a growing shortage of physicians that’s only expected to get worse after full implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The Association of American Medical Colleges anticipates that the shortage in all specialties will grow from 5,000 in 2010 to 13,700 in 2015 to 25,000 in 2020 to 62,900 by 2025 (65,800 in primary care alone).

The RAND Corp., a nonprofit focused on research and analysis, predicts that if patient-centered medical homes increase the number of patients they serve using NPs and PAs, it will help to relieve the physician shortage. The gap between physician shortage vs. demand grows, but patient-centered medical homes are filling that gap.

As the nation braces for a physician shortage, will nurse practitioners and physician assistants fill the gaps?

As nurse practitioners and physician assistants, salary figures for the two positions, and physician assistants, salary figures for the two positions, are found that medical homes use 20 percent more NPs per doctor, and that comes at a savings to the healthcare provider, says Tricia Thompson, CEO of the American Organization of Nurse Practitioners. “Part of respect is not bringing the medical assistant to handle.”

PAs provide more access, in a variety of different settings." Medicine is a team sport, and it’s something that PAs are really well-suited for and understand very well," says Tricia Thompson, CEO of the American Organization of Nurse Practitioners. "Part of respect is not bringing the medical assistant to handle.”

NPs and PAs are critical to coordinated, team-based care that already there’s a shortfall of about 25,000 physicians in the country is bracing for a sizable physician shortage. As the nation braces for a physician shortage, will nurse practitioners and physician assistants fill the gaps?

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There were about 100,000 practicing NPs in the country in 2010; that will balloon by 57 percent to 244,000 in 2025, and physician assistants will increase from 62,900 in 2010 to 130,600 by 2025 (65,800 in primary care alone).
Here are some questions and words of advice when thinking about hiring a nurse practitioner.

**NARROWING THE LIST:**
- Are they qualified?
- Which are in greater supply?
- What duties do I need them to perform?
- Who will I include in the hiring process?
- How will the PA or NP mesh with my staff?

Medicare defers to state law in defining scope of practice, but doctors can bill one of two ways:
- Not enrolling them and
- (reimbursed at 100 percent, though Medicare applies and treatment requirements)

Physician’s name and NPI

Research:

**HOW WE DID IT:**
- American College of Physicians, 2010


The average full-time salary has increased by 43.4 percent since 2001, up to $90,583, according to the ADVANCE Physician Assistants census reports. Meanwhile, the average PA salary has ballooned by 33.5 percent over the same period, up to $94,870, according to American Academy of Physician Assistants census reports.
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**BEFORE STARTING THE SEARCH:**

Do I want to hire a nurse practitioner or a physician assistant?

**NARROWING THE LIST:**

- Which are in greater supply?

**AFTER THE HIRE — PRIVATE AND PUBLIC HIRES:**

- How will I be reimbursed for the NP or PA duties?

Educate yourself about the certifications and regulations.

- Who will I include in the hiring process?

Medicare defers to state law in defining scope of practice, but doctors can bill one of two ways:

1. Under the PA’s or NP’s own name and National Provider Identification number
2. Not enrolling them and having practices bill for service

### Nurse Practitioners

Nurse practitioners are registered nurses who are prepared, through advanced educational and clinical training, to provide a wide range of diagnostic and acute health services to individuals of all ages,” according to the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. “NPs are authorized to practice across the nation and have prescriptive privileges, of varying degrees, in 24 states.

They may work in a solo practice, or in a clinic, hospital, school or industry setting.

### Physician Assistants

Physician assistants are medical professionals who work as part of a team with a doctor. “A PA is a graduate of an accredited educational program who is licensed and certified to practice medicine with the supervision of a physician. PAs perform physical examinations, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret lab tests, perform procedures, assist in surgery, provide patient education and counseling, and make rounds in hospitals and nursing homes.”

*Typical work roles in 2013:

- Internal medicine
- Surgery
- Primary care
- Mental health
- Family medicine
- Emergency medicine
- Cardiology practice
- Cardiology practice
- Cardiology practice
- Cardiology practice
* 

**Number practicing in 2011:**

155,000

**Average salary in 2011:**

$90,583

**Number practicing in 2012:**

84,066

**Average salary in 2012:**

$94,870

### NP, PA salaries skyrocket over the past decade

From the 2001 National Sample Survey of Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants, the median salary for NPs was $65,000 and for PAs was $60,684. In 2011, the median salary for NPs was $94,870 and for PAs was $103,722.

The average NPI for NPs and PAs was $100,000 in 2011, up to $90,583 for NPs and $104,703 for PAs, according to the ADVANCE for Nurse Practitioners, 2012. Meanwhile, the average full-time salary has increased by 43.4 percent since 2001, up to $90,583 for NPs and $104,703 for PAs, according to the ADVANCE for Nurse Practitioners, 2012.

### A closer look at nurse practitioners and physician assistants

#### Nurse Practitioners

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