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Office of University Communications

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Benefits of NP Care Highlighted During National Nurse Practitioner Week Nov. 12-18

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – In recognition of the 52nd anniversary of the inaugural Nurse Practitioner (NP) program, the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) is honoring these health care providers during National Nurse Practitioners Week, Nov. 12-18.

 students in the Family Nurse Practitioner program

The first nurse practitioner program was established at the University of Colorado (Boulder, Colo.), and now there are nearly 235,000 NPs licensed to practice in the U.S., with an additional 23,000 graduating each year.

In 2013, Gardner-Webb University established the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) program track as part of the Hunt School of Nursing's Master of Science in Nursing. Eighty-five people have graduated from the GWU program since its inception.

"The FNP program brings the unique opportunity for Registered Nurses to expand their knowledge in a nurturing Christian setting with amazing new facilities led by passionate faculty," said Dr. Anna Hamrick, assistant professor of nursing and director of the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) program. "The program's hybrid format with a mix of online and on-campus learning has received excellent ratings from both current students and graduates. Students are pleased with the flexibility of the online sessions mixed with the collaboration and networking from on-campus sessions."

As licensed, expert clinicians with advanced education and extensive clinical preparation, NPs provide primary, acute and specialty health care services. In addition to providing a full range of services, they work as partners with their patients, guiding them toward educated health care decisions and healthy lifestyle choices. The confidence that patients have in NP-delivered health care is evidenced by the more than 916 million visits made to NPs every year.

"Family Nurse Practitioners are prepared to care for individuals across the lifespan—from birth to older adult," Hamrick shared. "Not only are FNPs educated in health promotion techniques, diagnosis and management of acute illness, they are also prepared to care for patients with co-morbidities or overlapping illnesses."

According to AANP, National Nurse Practitioner Week celebrates exceptional health care providers and reminds lawmakers of the importance of removing outdated barriers to help NPs offer patients full and direct access to all the services they are educated and certified to provide. Nurse practitioners are informed, in touch and involved, making them the health care providers of choice for millions and a solution to the primary care crisis in America.

"I maintain my clinical practice as a nurse practitioner one day a week with hospice and palliative care," Hamrick offered. "I am blessed to work with a couple of our graduates as colleagues now. These are GWU graduates that I feel confident in seeking care from and that I'm confident in providing care beside. Gardner-Webb University's College of Health Sciences and the Hunt School of Nursing are pleased to be preparing the next generation of health care providers to care for all ages in our region."

The American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) is the largest professional membership organization for nurse practitioners (NPs) of all specialties. AANP provides legislative leadership at the local, state and national levels, advancing health policy; promoting excellence in practice, education and research; and establishing standards that best serve NP patients and other health care consumers. AANP represents the interests of NPs as providers^[1]_[SEP] of high-quality, cost-effective, comprehensive, patient-centered health care. For more information, visit aanp.org.

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