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### GWU Hunt School of Nursing Celebrates Contributions of Nurse Practitioners

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# GWU Hunt School of Nursing Celebrates Contributions of Nurse Practitioners

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Office of University  
Communications

November 15, 2016

## *Benefits of NP Care Highlighted During National Nurse Practitioner Week Nov. 13-19*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – In recognition of the 51st 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. 13-19. The first nurse practitioner program was established at the University of Colorado (Boulder, Colo.), and now there are over 222,000 NPs licensed to practice in the U.S., with an additional 20,000 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. More than 65 students in two separate cohorts have since graduated from the FNP program at Gardner-Webb, and another cohort is set to complete the program in May.

“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.

“I maintain my clinical practice as a nurse practitioner one day a week with hospice and palliative care,” Hamrick offered. “I actually get to work with a couple of our graduates as colleagues now. These are folks that I feel confident in seeking care from and that I’m confident in providing care beside.”

Tana Heaton graduated from Gardner-Webb in 2015 with a Master of Science in Nursing – Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) degree. She said the structure of the coursework made it possible for her to achieve her higher education goals. “As an active nurse with a family, the program’s hybrid format offered me the flexibility of online learning along with the classroom setting, which provided the hands on experience I needed to develop my new professional skills,” Heaton shared. “The GWU Family Nurse Practitioner program is the perfect combination of independent learning with the opportunity to develop a network of professionals we will call on throughout our career.”

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.

“Nurse Practitioners are prepared to partner with the greater healthcare system to increase access and improve health in North Carolina,” Hamrick shared. “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.”

To listen to the full WGWG.org interview with Dr. Anna Hamrick, click below:

*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 of high-quality, cost-effective, comprehensive, patient-centered health care. For more information, visit [aanp.org](http://aanp.org).*

*Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University’s purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).*