



**SCOPE AND STANDARDS
FOR EMERGENCY
NURSE PRACTITIONER PRACTICE**

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AAENP MISSION

The American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners promotes high quality, evidence based practice for nurse practitioners providing emergency care for patients of all ages and acuities in collaboration with an interdisciplinary team.

More specifically, the Academy seeks to:

- Establish guidelines for quality and safety emergency health care
- Encourage continuing clinical education of emergency nurse practitioners
- Support training and education in emergency care
- Facilitate research in emergency care
- Collaborate with professional health organizations and academic institutions

AAENP VISION

We are dedicated to sustained partnerships with all emergency care providers, academic and healthcare institutions. We will use our expertise in research, curricular development, nursing regulation, and clinical practice to offer patients across the life span the highest quality care at all acuity levels.

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Introduction

Nurse practitioners have been providing care within emergency care settings since the 1980's, but the need is growing given the current shortages of physician providers and increased numbers of patients seeking care in the nation's emergency departments. Ensuring adequate numbers of appropriately prepared providers is essential to patient safety outcomes. The Emergency Nurse Practitioner (ENP) role is unique in that it spans population and acuity continuums. Emergency care focuses on potentially life-threatening conditions irrespective of the patient's initial chief complaint or reason for seeking care. ENPs must be prepared to provide primary care, acute resuscitation, as well as manage complex, unstable conditions in patients of all ages.

In 2008, the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Consensus model was adopted nationally as the regulatory framework for NP licensure, accreditation, certification, and education. This model delineates the process by which nurse practitioners are nationally certified by population foci, and may then go forward to obtain specialty knowledge and competencies. Competencies and certification at the specialty level are determined by specialty organizations which are responsible for shaping the specialty role and providing support for the NPs practicing within their given specialties. Competencies for the ENP were initially published in 2008 by the Emergency Nurses Association and are now currently being updated.

The initial scope of practice and standards of care for the ENP were written in 2000. With the establishment of the American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners in 2013, updated scopes and standards have now been developed by the ENP specialty organization in accordance with the following frameworks used nationally in NP education and regulation:

- *Consensus Model for APRN Regulation*
- *Nurse Practitioner Core Competencies Content, 2014 by NONPF*
- *2016 ENP Practice Analysis completed by the AANPCP*
- *Emergency Nurses Association, 2008 Competencies for Nurse Practitioners in Emergency Care*

References

APRN Consensus Work Group, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing APRN Advisory Committee. *Consensus Model for APRN Regulation: Licensure, Accreditation, Certification & Education*. Washington, D.C.: American Nurses Association, 2008. https://www.ncsbn.org/Consensus_Model_Report.pdf

American Association of Nurse Practitioners Certification Program. *2016 ENP Practice Analysis, published in part within the Emergency NP Specialty Certification Candidate Handbook*. [http://www.aanpcert.org/resource/documents/ENP%20Candidate%20Handbook%20\(final\)%2009.14.16.pdf](http://www.aanpcert.org/resource/documents/ENP%20Candidate%20Handbook%20(final)%2009.14.16.pdf).

ENA Competencies, <http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.nonpf.org/resource/resmgr/competencies/compsforpsinemergencycarefinal.pdf>

NONPF 2014 Nurse Practitioner Core Competencies Content. <http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/nonpf.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/Competencies/NPCoreCompsContentFinalNov20.pdf>



SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR EMERGENCY NURSE PRACTITIONERS

This document provides an overview of the role, education, accountability, and responsibility of the Emergency Nurse Practitioner (ENP).

The scope of practice for ENPs is based upon nationally recognized licensure, education and certification with inclusion of specialty educational content.

ENP scope of practice must be viewed in conjunction with local, state and national regulatory licensure requirements.

ENP scope of practice may be limited by organizational credentialing and privileging entities.

Role of the Emergency Nurse Practitioner

Emergency Nurse Practitioners (ENPs) are specialty care providers and licensed practitioners.

ENPs provide care to patients in ambulatory, urgent, and emergent care settings.

ENPs assess, diagnose, and manage episodic illnesses, injuries and acute exacerbations of chronic diseases.

ENPs are prepared to manage patients across the lifespan, within the scope of population-area NP education and national certification, inclusive of acuity levels ranging from non-urgent, to urgent and emergent conditions.

In managing the acute resuscitative stage of emergency care, ENPs engage in patient prioritization, triage, medical decision making, differential diagnosis, patient management, monitoring and on-going evaluation, appropriate consultation and in coordinating the transfer of care.

ENPs order and interpret diagnostic studies (e.g., labs, imaging) and prescribe pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapies.

ENPs instruct patients, families, and/or significant others with regard to health/wellness along with injury prevention/patient safety.

ENPs work collaboratively with other health care providers, allied/auxiliary health care personnel and stakeholders.

ENPs are advocates, researchers, consultants, and educators.

ENPs are culturally competent.

ENPs engage in public health emergency preparedness and response efforts.

Definition of Acute Care in Emergency Practice

Acute care in emergency practice is not defined by setting or population.

Acute care in emergency practice is defined as the dynamic, short term stabilization of conditions including, but not limited to, treatment of injuries, new onset clinical conditions and exacerbation of chronic co-morbidities.

Acute care in emergency practice is inclusive of resuscitative stabilization and the treatment of medical and traumatic clinical presentations for patients across the lifespan, within the scope of population-area NP education and national certification.

ENP Education

ENP specialization builds upon NP entry-into-practice knowledge and skills and requires a minimum of a master's level preparation or specialized preparation at the post-master's or doctoral level.

Educational preparation provides ENPs with specialized knowledge and clinical competencies which enable them to practice in various health care settings, establish differential diagnoses, manage and initiate treatment plans, order and interpret diagnostic tests, prescribe medications, perform procedures and determine final patient dispositions.

ENP educational preparation includes the evaluation and management of patients across the lifespan within the scope of population-area NP education, national certification and care continuum. ENP program accreditation requirements and competency-based standards ensure that they are educationally prepared to provide quality, comprehensive care through entrustable professional activities (EPAs).

ENP Accountability

ENP practice is accountable to patients, families and communities, and provides evidence-based quality health care based on national standards. ENP practice conforms to professional ethical codes of conduct.

ENPs meet national certification requirements (See the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Program ENP-C) at <https://www.aanpcert.org> and the American Nurses Credentialing Corporation ENP-BC requirements at <http://nursecredentialing.org/EmergencyNP>.

ENPs undergo peer review and periodic clinical outcome evaluation.

ENPs provide evidence of emergency continued professional development via continuing education, on the job training, or through post-graduate specific fellowships to meet ongoing clinical practice requirements.

ENP Responsibility

ENPs are responsible to the public as consumers of health care and therefore, keep abreast of the constantly changing landscape of health care trends and of the latest evidence-based research.

ENPs take full responsibility for continued professional development.

ENPs are leaders who are active in their relevant professional organizations.

ENPs are actively engaged with health policy initiatives.



STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR EMERGENCY NURSE PRACTITIONERS

This document provides an overview of applicable standards and definitions for the Emergency Nurse Practitioner (ENP) role.

ENP Qualifications and Competencies

ENPs are specialized licensed practitioners, who possess the necessary clinical competencies to provide optimal care to patients in ambulatory, urgent, and emergent care settings.

ENP specialization builds upon NP entry-into-practice knowledge and skills and requires a minimum of a master's level preparation or specialized preparation at the post-master's or doctoral level.

ENPs demonstrate competencies by applying standardized care guidelines in their clinical practice. Other ways of maintaining competencies include participation in maintaining continuing education, quality improvement processes and peer reviews - including the systematic periodic review of records and treatment plans - while maintaining specialty and population-focused certification in compliance with current laws and regulations.

Definition of Acute Care in Emergency Practice

Acute care in emergency practice is not defined by setting or population.

Acute care in emergency practice is defined as dynamic, short term stabilization of conditions including, but not limited to, treatment of injuries, new onset clinical conditions and exacerbation of chronic comorbidities.

Acute care in emergency practice is inclusive of resuscitative stabilization and treatment of medical and traumatic clinical presentations for patients across the lifespan within the scope of population-area NP education and national certification.

ENP Prioritization of Care

ENPs incorporate evidence-based practice as their framework for managing patient conditions. This process includes the following components: assessment, differential diagnoses/diagnosis, medical decision making, and treatment/management.

Assessment

ENPs assess and triage a patient's condition by obtaining a focused and pertinent history, identifying risk factors, performing an appropriate focused/complete physical examination, and by ordering and/or providing preventative or diagnostic procedures.

Differential Diagnoses/Diagnosis

ENPs develop a differential diagnosis and/or diagnoses of both life threatening and non-life threatening conditions by utilizing critical thinking while simultaneously synthesizing and analyzing patient data. ENPs establish a differential diagnoses based on the patient's medical history, physical exam findings, interpretation of diagnostic studies, while continually establishing priorities to meet the needs of the patient, their family, and/or the community.

Medical Decision Making

ENPs utilize critical thinking during medical screenings and diagnostic processes by synthesizing and analyzing the data (i.e., all known diagnoses being treated, undiagnosed conditions being evaluated, treatments implemented, considered or planned) to execute a plan of care including stabilization, resuscitation of unstable conditions and the transfer of care when appropriate.

ENPs provide medical screening evaluations in accordance with EMTALA. This includes: documentation of the chief complaint and pertinent history incorporating health risk factors and physical exam findings; interpretation of diagnostic data including the rationale for the medical necessity of tests; medical decision making with differential diagnoses, adding on-going evaluation of patient progress and response to treatment to determine the plan of care.

Treatment/Management

ENPs provide individualized, cost-effective, evidence-based plans of care to maximize a patient's well-being. ENPs plan of care consists of: ordering/interpreting diagnostics, ordering/performing therapeutic interventions including non-pharmacologic therapies, prescribing pharmacologic agents, developing patient-specific education plans, and making timely referral/consultations as needed. ENPs also provide acute resuscitation and stabilization of life-threatening conditions and coordinate transfers to critical care providers/facilities as warranted.

Plan Implementation: ENP interventions include established priorities of care that are individualized and based on current evidence-based guidelines.

Follow-up and Evaluation: ENPs determine the effectiveness of a patient's treatment plan by following a systematic process including documentation of patient care outcomes, on-going reassessment, and/or plan modification to optimize a patient's health status within the context of emergency care.

An ENP's practice emphasizes Health Education including the provision of community resources for patients and their families.

Facilitation of Patient Self-care: ENPs facilitate entry into the health care system and also provide competent care in a safe environment. ENPs promote patient participation by providing the necessary information to promote optimal health and make informed health decisions. The ENP consults with other health care personnel as needed and appropriately utilizes health care resources.

ENP Documentation

ENPs document accurately, legibly and in a timely manner while maintaining confidential emergency care medical records.

ENP Interprofessional/Collaborative Responsibilities

ENPs participate as an interprofessional/collaborative member in emergency care, interacting with colleagues to promote comprehensive, quality patient care.

ENP Patient Advocate Responsibilities

Ethical and legal standards provide the basis of patient advocacy. As an advocate, ENPs participate in health policy, regulatory and legislative activities. ENPs are able to define their role to patients, families and other professionals.

Practice-Based Research

ENPs promote research by formulating clinical inquiries, by conducting or participating in research and quality improvement studies, and disseminating and incorporating findings into their clinical practice.

Other Roles

ENPs blend the roles of clinician, mentor, educator, researcher, leader, interdisciplinary team member and consultant.

SCOPE AND STANDARDS FOR EMERGENCY NURSE PRACTITIONER PRACTICE

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The American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners (AAENP) supports the following documents:

AAENP (2015). Scope of Practice for Nurse Practitioners.

See <https://www.aanp.org/images/documents/publications/scopeofpractice.pdf>

AAENP (2015). Standards of Practice for Nurse Practitioners. See

<https://www.aanp.org/images/documents/publications/standardsofpractice.pdf>

Competencies for Nurse Practitioners in Emergency Care (2008). See

www.nonpf.org/resource/resmgr/competencies/compsfornpinemergencycarefinal.pdf

National Association of Nurse Practitioner Faculties Population-Focused Nurse Practitioner Competencies. See

<http://www.nonpf.org/resource/resmgr/Competencies/CompilationPopFocusComps2013.pdf>

The Emergency Nurses Association Standards of Practice for APRNs (2015). See [https://www.ena.org/practice-](https://www.ena.org/practice-research/Practice/Pages/AdvPractice.aspx)

[research/Practice/Pages/AdvPractice.aspx](https://www.ena.org/practice-research/Practice/Pages/AdvPractice.aspx)

The American Nurses Association Code of Ethics (2015). See

[http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/EthicsStandards/CodeofEthicsforNurses/Code-of-Ethics-](http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/EthicsStandards/CodeofEthicsforNurses/Code-of-Ethics-2015-Part-1.pdf)

[2015-Part-1.pdf](http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/EthicsStandards/CodeofEthicsforNurses/Code-of-Ethics-2015-Part-1.pdf)

The Emergency Nurses Association Code of Ethics (2015). See

<https://www.ena.org/about/Documents/CodeofEthics.pdf>



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