

Informational Hearing on Advanced Practice Registered Nurses
House Health and Human Services Committee
March 3, 2016

Dr. Monica Scheibmeir, PhD, APRN, FAANP

Good Afternoon. I am Monica Scheibmeir, Dean of the School of Nursing at Washburn University. I am also the past president of the Kansas Association of Colleges of Nursing, which I am representing today. I would like to provide a brief picture of the educational application process, curriculum, and innovation that is occurring within Kansas regarding Advance Practice Registered Nurses.

In 2016, there are five public universities and one private university that offer advanced practice nursing education programs. Fort Hays State University, Pittsburg State University, Wichita State University, Washburn University, and the University of Kansas all have programs that train APRNs, specifically family nurse practitioners. In addition, Wichita State University, the University of Kansas, and Washburn University offer nurse practitioner programs in adult and psychiatric mental health nursing. Newman University, along with the University of Kansas offers a nurse anesthesia program, and the University of Kansas offers a nurse midwifery program. Starting in 2008, and continuing into the near future, the Kansas APRN programs have been closing their existing master's programs and are now offering doctoral degrees for APRNs. This change in the length of APRN educational preparation began in 2005. At that time, there was national consensus that nurse practitioners, and other APRNs, should extend their training so as to complete all of the educational requirements for a doctorate.

So how does a nurse, specifically an RN, achieve the status of APRN? The nurse must first:

1. Complete a bachelors of nursing degree from a nationally accredited program. This requires 124 or more credit hours to complete a bachelor's degree in nursing.
2. Students must be Registered Nurses prior to admission.
 - a. The typical, or average length of work experience for nurses applying to graduate programs is 3 years.
 - b. That means **the RN has over 6000 hours in the role of the nurse before he/she is admitted to a graduate nursing program.** (compared to Physician Assistants or Medical students who OFTEN HAVE NO clinical experience prior to admission to their programs)
 - c. The RNs work in a variety of settings, which allow them to practice their patient assessment skills, increase their knowledge and understanding of how medications effect patients, how to best educate or instruct the patients to take their medications so as to avoid patient harm, review patient laboratory and other diagnostic tests that are pertinent to the patient's diagnosis and plan of care.
3. The application process requires the RN to have a 3.0 or higher GPA to be accepted into the program. (THE SAME AS KU Medical Schools Post-Baccalaureate Program). There are more applications than there are available spaces in the graduate and doctoral APRN programs. Some specific programs, like nurse anesthesia and nurse midwifery have additional work experience requirements for their applicants.

4. Once the student is admitted to the program, it takes students 3 -4 years of full time study or 4-8 yrs. of part time study. The core content for all APRNs involves advanced pharmacology, advanced health assessment, and advanced pathophysiology. These are national requirements of all APRN programs.
5. **It is important to know that APRN students are admitted to a specialty option and this is their defined practice area, APRNs do not have an all- inclusive area of practice like physicians.**
6. Students have clinical content that is directly related to their particular specialty/focus area. They receive multiple graduate courses that require extensive preparation to begin the process of learning their specific specialty APRN role.
 - a. Alongside the face-to-face time with faculty, the students are being sent out to a variety of clinical sites to demonstrate that they can perform to the professional standards of their respective APRN specialty role.
 - b. For the nurse practitioners who are entering into the doctoral NP programs, **they will have over 1000** hours of training above and beyond what they received in their undergraduate nursing program and in addition to their work clinical experience.

There are hundreds of nurse practitioners in Kansas who have been prepared at the master's level for over the past 20 years. They have demonstrated their ability to safely provide care for their patients. Many of those master's prepared nurses are returning to nursing programs to complete their doctoral education, as they are fully aware that the new educational standard for APRNs is to have completed a doctoral program. They often come with years of practice experience, and in their doctoral program they must meet the 1000 hours of clinical training. As a state, Kansas is well positioned to handle the growing number of master's prepared nurses who want to complete their doctoral degree within the next two decades.

In conclusion - A report by the CITIZEN ADVOCACY CENTER stated:

If the only measuring rod were who has attended school the longest, physicians would always be the practitioners who have to do everything, more education is not necessarily synonymous with superior quality.

Physicians attend school longer ...because of their all-inclusive scope of practice.
Non-physician practitioners concentrate their training on more limited, specialized skills and procedures.

I am hopeful this information provides a brief overview of APRN education and their qualifications to practice in Kansas.

Thank you.