

# NAPNAP: It is not Just for Primary Care Anymore

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NAPNAP has grown steadily over the years. This is great news because some similar organizations have struggled in recent years. Our membership is now currently at 8,800 members and growing. Not only is the foundation of pediatric primary care strong in the organization, but acute care and specialty care members are gaining in numbers. It is in part due to the utilization of nurse practitioners (NPs) in hospitals that the growth of the NP movement has been so robust (Hittle & Kline-Tilford, 2010). With the decrease in resident hours and shortage of physicians, NPs have stepped up to help provide high-quality, effective care (Liu, Goryakin, Maeda, Bruckner, & Scheffler, 2017). NAPNAP is the advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) home for those who care for children, whether they exclusively work with children or if children are only a portion of their practice.

Fall reminds me of the start of the school year and new nursing students. I love the smell of fall. It smells clean and crisp to me. It makes me want to play football. I had a good career in the Chicago Football Social League. We won the Chicago Championship numerous times...ahh the good old days. Fall reminds me to reflect on all of the good things that have happened in my life and career. Choosing to be a nurse was one of my first good moves and becoming an NP was one of my best moves. I graduated with my acute care degree in 1997 and my primary care degree in 1999 (back when I was still playing football), which make me think again about my nursing beginnings.

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J Pediatr Health Care. (2017) 31, 523-524.

0891-5245/\$36.00

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pedhc.2017.06.007>

When I graduated from Rush University, not many organizations knew exactly what to do with an acute care PNP. Finding a job was challenging at that time if you did not want to do primary care. I had to explain what my degree was and what I could do. The question was, were we related to critical care only? There were not a lot of specialty care NPs at that time and there were only 20+ NPs in the organization I worked at, which is one of the largest freestanding children's hospitals. As I listen at our Advance Practice Council (a kind of a state-of-the-union), we are now at over 200 advance practice providers: predominantly pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs).

In 2004, one of my friends told me she was starting the NAPNAP Acute Care Special Interest Group (SIG). I was asked to sign the charter to establish this group. I thought this would be a great way to network with others across the country that were like me. At the time, I was a kidney transplant PNP. I spent day after day talking to families and explaining that although I had a full-time job coordinating kidney transplants for children, this was not common for a PNP.

Now, PNPs across the nation work in almost every specialty there is, if not every subspecialty. Approximately 32% of all NAPNAP members work in a specialty or acute care position. There are currently 19 SIGs. It is through these SIGs that we draw our experts. SIGs are a critical part of NAPNAP's community outreach, as is our TeamPeds: Volunteers program.

Have you ever thought, how can I get appointed to national roundtables or advisory groups? How can I contribute my expertise via media interviews or writing articles? How can I convey my passion about my specialty? How can I help set health policy at the state and federal level? The answer is the TeamPeds: Volunteers database. This is where the staff and I quickly and efficiently find our best experts. However, there's a big problem: we won't know about your special skills, passions, and clinical expertise unless you tell us! So

here is your call to action: go now to TeamsPeds: Volunteers ([www.napnap.org/teampeds-volunteers](http://www.napnap.org/teampeds-volunteers)) and tell us about yourself. We need our experts to help communicate the important issues to NAPNAP, our partner organizations, and the public.

Once again, this is your call to action! Share your passions and expertise with us. Join a SIG <https://www.napnap.org/special-interest-groups>. Email me at [president@napnap.org](mailto:president@napnap.org) if you think we have a void in our areas of focus. Go to TeamPeds: Volunteers [www.napnap.org/teampeds-volunteers](http://www.napnap.org/teampeds-volunteers) and update your

profile. Your expertise will benefit you professionally as well as NAPNAP, the greater health care community, and the children we all care about so much.

## REFERENCES

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