

## Education and Training of Health Practitioners in Virginia

MSV understands the valuable role nurse practitioners (NPs) play in providing needed health care services; however, for the patient’s safety, Virginia physicians strongly support the continued supervisory relationship physicians have with NPs. While NPs receive post-graduate level education, the education and training they undergo is not parallel to the education and years of supervised training a physician receives before practicing independently.

The education and training naturopathic “physicians” receive is neither equivalent nor comparable to the education and training physicians receive, and the licensure of those practitioners will threaten quality of care. Naturopathic “physicians” do not participate in a supervised residency program (i.e., undergo zero hours of residency training) while a physician undergoes 12,000 to 16,000 hours of supervised training as part of a residency program. The medical efficacies of the treatment modalities offered by naturopathic “physicians” are unproven.

	Medical Doctor & Doctor of Osteopathy	Physician Assistant	Nurse Practitioner	Naturopathic “physician”
<b>Length of graduate level education</b>	4 years (90 credit hours) + residency and fellowship <sup>1, 2</sup>	16 to 27 months (82 to 92 credit hours) <sup>3</sup>	Family NP: 2 years (46-52 credit hours) <sup>4</sup> NDP (post-MSN): extra 2 years for a total of 4 years <sup>5</sup>	4 years <sup>6</sup>
<b>Post-graduate residency and fellowship</b>	Range from 3 to 7 years (varies by specialty) <sup>7</sup>	No uniform residency requirements	Virginia schools have no residency requirements	No uniform residency requirements
<b>Total patient care hours required throughout training</b>	12,000 to 16,000 <sup>8</sup>	4 semesters of clinical rotations <sup>9</sup>	500 (MSN) or 1,000 (post-MSN) <sup>10</sup>	850 <sup>11</sup>
<b>Continuing Medical Education</b>	60 hours required every 2 years	100 hours required every 2 years	40 hours (48 with prescriptive authority) required every 2 years	No requirements
<b>Licensed practicing in Virginia</b>	15,328 (M.D.) 672 (D.O.)	1,611 <sup>12</sup>	4,410	0
<b>Programs in Virginia</b>	» EVMS » UVA » VCOM » VCU » Virginia Tech Carilion	» EVMS » Jefferson College of Health Sciences » JMU » Shenandoah University	» GMU » Marymount University » ODU » Shenandoah University » UVA » VCU	None

(See back for annotations)

<sup>1</sup> **Standard M.D. Curriculum:** Years 1 and 2 are spent in labs and classrooms with courses covering Anatomy, Biochemistry, Physiology, Pharmacology, Psychology, Microbiology, Pathology, Medical Ethics, and Laws Governing Medicine. Students also learn to take medical histories, examine patients, and diagnose illnesses. In Years 3 and 4, students work with patients under the supervision of experienced physicians in hospitals and clinics, learning acute, chronic, preventive, and rehabilitative care. Through rotations in Internal Medicine, Family Practice, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Surgery, they gain experience in the diagnosis and treatment of illness.

<sup>2</sup> **Example D.O. Curriculum from VCOM:** Courses include Cell Biology, Physiology, Microbiology, Immunology, Genetics, Embryology, Pathology, Pharmacology, Medical Ethics, Anatomy, Physiology, Principles of Primary Care, Introduction to Osteopathic Manipulation and Behavioral Medicine. Disciplines covered include Immunology and Hematology, Dermatology, Cardiopulmonary System, Neurological, Psychiatry, and Musculoskeletal Systems, Gastrointestinal and Endocrine Systems, Nutrition, Renal and Genitourinary Systems. Students complete rotations in specialties in third year and osteopathic medical school surgical selectives and electives in their fourth year.

<sup>3</sup> **Example Curriculum from JMU's Physician Assistant Program:** Human Gross Anatomy with Clinical Applications, Pathophysiology I & II, Physical Diagnosis I & II, The Physician Assistant Profession, Clinical, Laboratory Medicine I & II, Pharmacology for PAs I & II, Clinical Medicine I-III, Managing Medical Information I-III, Health Care Environment, Women's Medicine, Pediatric Medicine, Behavioral Medicine, Health Promotion & Disease Prevention, Values in Primary Care, Transition to Practice, Rotation Periods 1 through 11.

<sup>4</sup> **Example Curriculum from ODU's Family NP Program:** Theoretical Foundations for Nursing Practice, Advanced Pathophysiology, Advanced Physical Assessment, Advanced Physical Assessment Lab, Family & Community Focused Primary Care, Pharmacotherapeutics for Primary Health Care Providers, Research: An Introduction to Design, Health Promotion and Maintenance, Primary Care Approaches for Women, Advanced Family Nursing I-III Practicum, Advanced Family Nursing I: Management of Acute Illnesses, Research: Methodologies and Application, Primary Care Approaches for Children, Issues in Advanced Nursing Practice, Nursing Seminar in Complex Health Problems, and Advanced Family Nursing II: Management of Chronic Illnesses.

<sup>5</sup> **Example Curriculum from ODU's Doctor of Nursing Practice Program:** DNP I: Caring for Vulnerable Populations, The Business of Practice, Epidemiology, Clinical Residency I- IV, DNP II: Transforming Practice, Practice-Based Research/Evaluation, Leadership and Practice, Informatics/Database Management, Health Care Planning and Policy, and DNP Capstone.

<sup>6</sup> **Example Curriculum from the National University of Health Sciences Naturopathic Medicine school in Lombard, IL:** Courses for first two years include Spine & Extremities Anatomy, Histology & Embryology, Medical Systems Pathology, Physiology & Hematology, Human Biochemistry, Clinical Biochemistry, Fundamentals of Natural Medicine & Historical Perspectives, Foundations of Naturopathic Medicine, Head & Neck Anatomy, Neurophysiology, Fundamentals of Pathology, Fundamentals of Microbiology & Public Health, Normal Radiographic Anatomy & Variants, Basic Science Applications: Determinants of Health, Homeopathy, Thorax, Abdomen & Pelvis Anatomy, Neuroendocrinology, GI & Reproductive Physiology, Nutritional Biochemistry, Systems Pathology, Medical Microbiology, Oriental Medicine, Introduction to Naturopathic Counseling, Evaluation & Management courses, Cardiovascular, Respiratory & Renal Physiology, and Medical Genomics. Years 3 and 4 include similar courses that are an expansion of the first two years of classes. Clinical work is mostly completed in outpatient settings during the students' coursework. Please note, credit hours for naturopathic "physicians" are not calculated on the same scale as the other providers.

<sup>7</sup> M.D. and D.O. sub-specialties can require an additional 1 to 3 years of clinical training.

<sup>8</sup> M.D. and D.O. patient care hours calculated from Year 3 of medical school to completion of residency.

<sup>9</sup> PA patient care hours received through clinical rotations in specialties such as primary care, pediatrics, orthopedics, women's health, surgery, psychiatry, and emergency medicine that occur the last 3 semesters of the MSN program.

<sup>10</sup> NP patient care occurs through clinic rotations in primary care, women's health, pediatrics, and specialties.

<sup>11</sup> Naturopathic "physician" patient care occurs through clinic and site rotations beginning in final 2 years of graduate education.

<sup>12</sup> Projected number of NPs as of the end of 2008 from Kaiser State Health Facts.

For more information, contact the Medical Society of Virginia's government affairs department at 804 | 343-1185.

