



Scope of Practice for the Board-certified Women's* Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP-BC)

Professional Role of the WHNP-BC

Board-certified Women's Health Nurse Practitioners (WHNP-BCs) are advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) licensed as independent practitioners who plan and deliver a full range of women's and gender-related healthcare services, starting at puberty and continuing throughout the lifespan.

WHNP-BCs provide healthcare services inclusive of all gender identities. They recognize the evolving landscape of gender identity and are prepared to meet the growing healthcare needs of individuals regardless of gender assignment at birth. WHNP-BC practice evolves to meet the demands of the ever-changing healthcare environment and increasing patient population needs and care complexity.

WHNP-BC practice is grounded in the principles of reproductive and social justice and a trauma-informed approach to care. Health promotion and disease prevention are incorporated to optimize patient outcomes.

WHNP-BCs perform assessments; order, perform, and interpret diagnostic and laboratory tests; make diagnoses; and provide pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic treatments. They offer routine and complex gynecologic, sexual, reproductive, menopause transition, and post-menopause healthcare. WHNP-BCs provide uncomplicated and high-risk obstetric care, during pre- and interpregnancy, prenatal, antepartum, and postpartum periods. The scope of practice also includes primary care for uncomplicated non-gynecologic health problems, health promotion, and disease prevention education, counseling, and screening. WHNP-BCs are academically and experientially prepared to provide sexual and reproductive healthcare to individuals who identify as men.

WHNP-BC practice is not limited to or defined by a specific healthcare setting. WHNP-BCs provide care in both inpatient and outpatient settings for patients of varying levels of acuity across the health continuum.

Education and Certification

WHNP-BCs are APRNs who obtain education at the master's, post-master's, or doctoral level, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide full-scope, evidence-based women's and gender-related healthcare autonomously. WHNP academic programs follow educational standards ensuring the attainment of core competencies for the APRN and NP role. Additional population-focused didactic education and clinical experiences prepare WHNP students with expanded competencies dedicated to women's and gender-related healthcare. Graduates of WHNP programs are eligible for national certification through the National Certification Corporation as board-certified WHNPs.

Accountability and Responsibility

WHNP-BCs improve the quality of women's and gender-related healthcare through change, collaboration, consultation, innovation, education, research, and leadership. They provide pivotal, innovative healthcare leadership in delivering cost-effective, evidence-based women's and gender-related care. Advocacy at the local, state, national, and international levels is essential to support the full scope of women's and gender-related healthcare.

WHNP practice continues to evolve to meet the demands of the ever-changing healthcare environment and increasing patient population needs and care complexity.

**Although the term "women" is used throughout this document, in accordance with the LACE Model and National Certification, WHNP-BCs provide gynecologic, sexual, reproductive, and obstetric healthcare that is inclusive of all gender identities.*

References

- National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health. *Women's Health Nurse Practitioner: Guidelines for Practice and Education, 8th ed.* (2020). National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health; Washington, DC.

- National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health. Male Sexual and Reproductive Health: Role of Women's Health Nurse Practitioners. Position Statement. (2022). [NPWH PositionStatement MaleS.pdf \(ymaws.com\)](#).
- National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health. WHNPs as Partners in Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis. Position Statement. (2022). [NPWH PositionStatement Mater.pdf \(ymaws.com\)](#).
- National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health. Healthcare for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Individuals. Position Statement. (2022). [NPWH PositionStatement Trans.pdf \(ymaws.com\)](#)
- National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties. *Competency Implementation Guide for Nurse Practitioner Faculty*. (2024). National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties; Washington, DC.

Mission:

NPWH is the professional community for Women's Health Nurse Practitioners and other advanced practice registered nurses who provide women's and gender-related healthcare. We set a standard of excellence by generating, translating, and promoting the latest research and evidence-based clinical guidance, providing high quality continuing education, and advocating for patients, providers, and the WHNP profession. Our mission includes protecting and promoting a woman and all individuals' rights to make their own choices regarding their health and well-being within the context of their lived experience and their personal, religious, cultural, and family beliefs.

Vision:

NPWH is the trusted champion and essential professional resource for Women's Health Nurse Practitioners and all advanced practice registered nurses who provide women's and gender-related healthcare. We value collaboration and build strong alliances with like-minded organizations and providers. The providers we serve are known experts in the primary, complex and specialty care of their patients, and are leaders and advocates in the advancement of healthcare toward a more just, healthy, and equitable world. Every two years, NPWH will identify three Priority Issue Areas based on your needs and trends in women's healthcare. We will develop new research, programming, and resources around these timely and important topics in order to create a lasting impact on our profession.