



2021 Legislative Agenda



Over **48,800** Registered Nurses
representing the largest healthcare
workforce in the State.

6 ISSUES

- Acuity-based patient staffing
 - Work-place violence
- APRNs as Medicaid primary care providers.
- Revising immunization laws to prior to starting grade rather than prior to age
- Removal of mandatory collaborative practice agreement for APRNs prescribing medications.
 - Schedule II medication prescribing authority for APRNs.

PRIORITIES

Acuity-based patient staffing

Safe staffing can be a matter of life and death, and achieving the right staffing levels requires nurses and management working together. Adding additional Registered Nurse (RN) hours to unit staffing has been shown to reduce the relative risk of adverse patient events, such as infection and bleeding. Reducing medical errors is also important from a financial perspective, as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has begun to implement value-based care models that incorporate risk-sharing with the potential to withhold payment for preventable hospital-acquired injuries or illnesses; private insurers are expected to follow suit.

Workplace Violence

One in four nurses has been abused in the workplace. Overall, the likelihood of health care workers being exposed to violence is higher than prison guards or police officers. The stories nurses tell are horrifying, and all too common. Every day, nurses are stabbed, punched, grabbed, kicked, verbally assaulted, or worse.

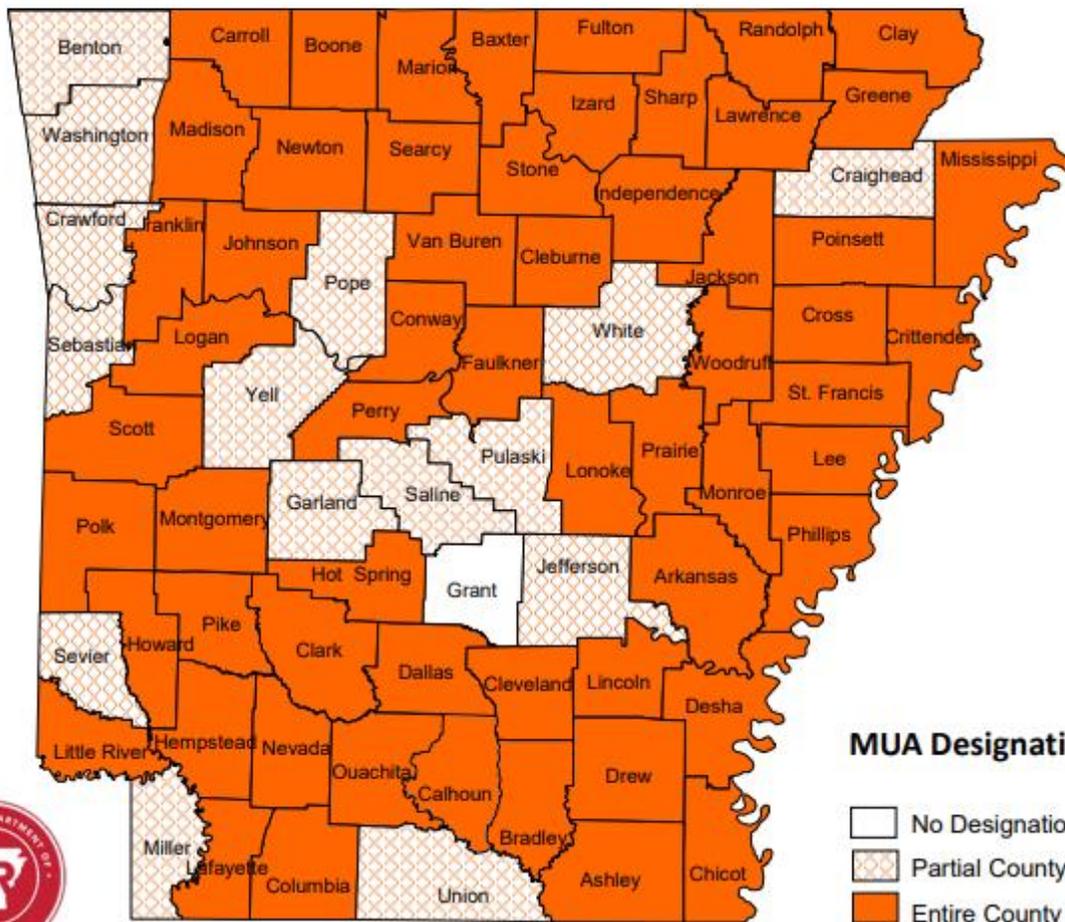
Nurse abuse can be prevented, with collaborative approaches.

APRNs as Medicaid primary care providers.

The demand for primary care services in the United States is expected to expand over the next several years as a result of aging of the population in the United States as well as enactment of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The Primary Care Needs Assessment report dated August 2015, the Office of Rural Health and Primary Care of the Arkansas Department of Health identified three main challenges to healthcare progress in Arkansas:

- Arkansas already has a serious shortage of primary health care providers, which is projected to worsen over the next few years.
- There are gaps in health care access, quality of care, and other barriers to negatively impact care in rural and underserved communities and populations.
- The demand for healthcare services is rising due to rapidly increasing number of elderly Arkansans and a general population with high rates chronic disease.
- For Arkansas State Fiscal Year 2017, there were 1.2 million Medicaid Enrollees, and only 2500 physicians and clinics listed as Medicaid PCPs.
- APRNs, often serve as defacto PCPs for patients in their clinics; however, the physician must sign any paperwork.
- When the physician leaves a clinic, all patients must change their PCP, even though they continue to see the APRN. This imposes an unnecessary burden on the patient and may delay needed care.
- If regulatory and statutory barriers to utilization as a primary care provider were removed, advanced practice registered nurses have the potential to create new access points for patients and Medicaid beneficiaries throughout the state.
- Only seven states do not allow NPs to be PCPs for Medicaid.

Arkansas Medically Underserved Areas (MUA)



MUA Designation

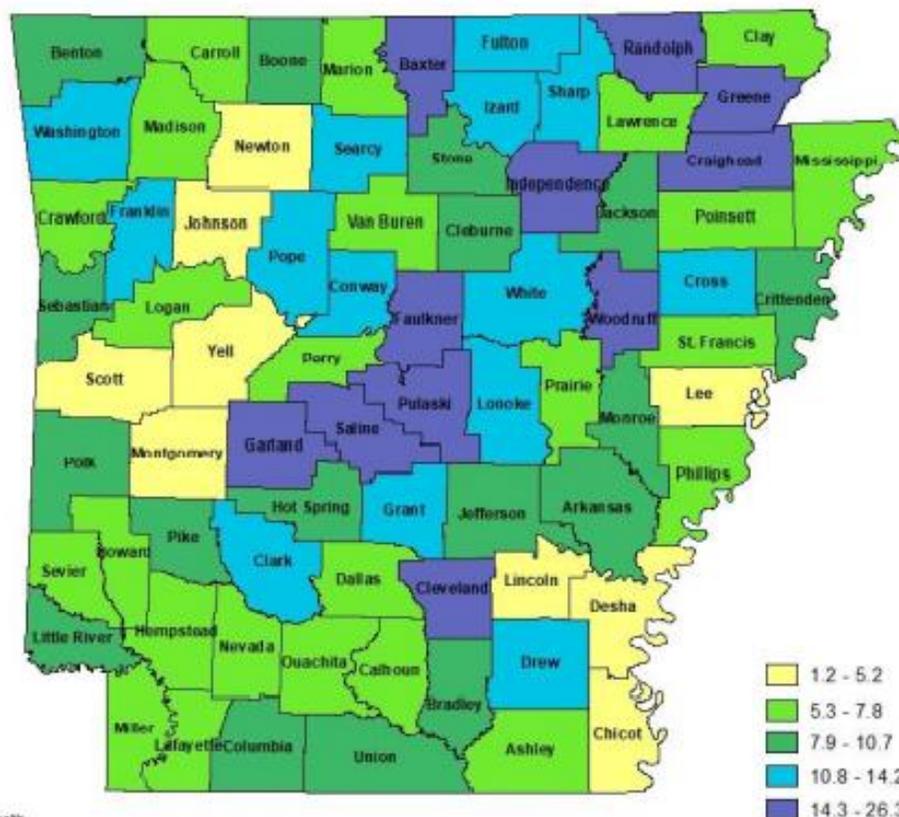
-  No Designation
-  Partial County Designation
-  Entire County Designation

Date: August 21, 2020
Source: Arkansas Department of Health
Map created by: Naomi Sweeney
Email: Naomi.Sweeney@arkansas.gov
Office of Rural Health and Primary Care
Data Source: Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)

At this point in the section, the Advanced Practice Nurse group will be broken down into the individual license types. The four licenses in this category are: Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM), Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CNRA), and Certified Nurse Practitioner (CNP). Certified Nurse Practitioner has replaced the term Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP). These four licenses are considered equal in educational requirements so there is not a hierarchy for this group. Since they are considered equal, the nurses that have more than one APN license will be counted in the analysis for each license that they have.

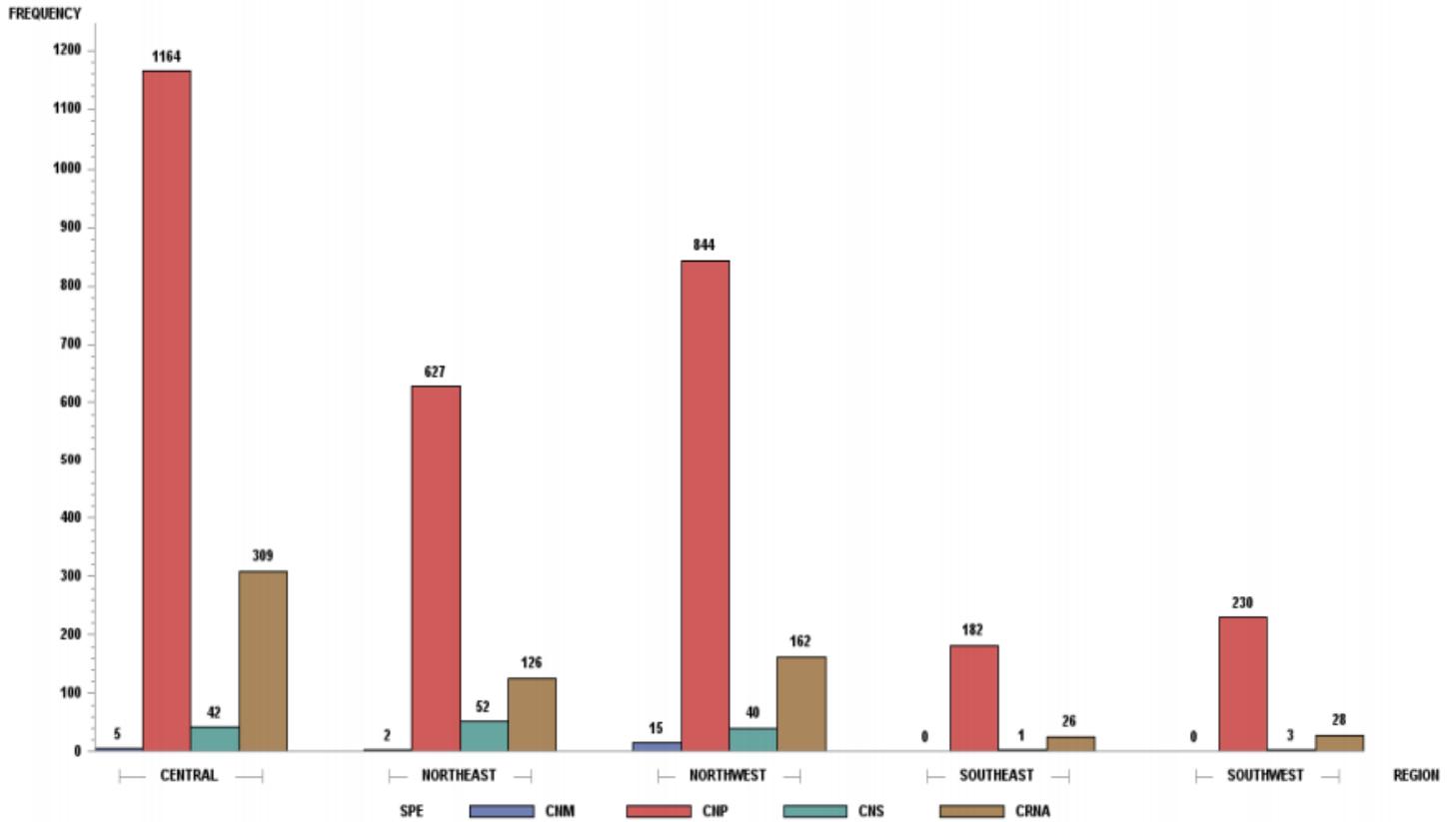
There are 3,846 Advanced Practice Nurses with a total of 3,858 licenses. This total includes 3,047 Certified Nurse Practitioners (CNP), 22 Certified Nurse Midwives (CNM), 138 Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS), and 651 Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA).

Advanced Practice Nurses by County Per 10,000 Population



Source: Arkansas Department of Health

Advanced Practice Nurses by Region



Arkansas Health Professions Manpower Statistics 2018
 Arkansas Department of Health- Health Statistics Branch