



What Psychiatrists Need to Know About...

Supervising Requirements

Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants (NP/PA) have long played an important role in the provision of healthcare in North Carolina. NP/PAs have worked with psychiatrists in every practice setting—private practice, institutions, and particularly community mental health agencies. (The first formal approval by the Medical Board for a NP to work under the supervision of a psychiatrist came in 1984.)

The multi-disciplinary team approach of psychiatric care has instilled an appreciation for and reliance upon all clinicians in the care of this complex patient population, making the field uniquely situated to embrace the evolving health care delivery system of team-based care, collaborative care, accountable care, and shared savings. To that end, psychiatry's ability to work with other professionals, to assess skills, and to assist in their development will be even more crucial.

In our efforts to provide support and technical assistance to our members, NCPA has developed a resource for psychiatrists in their role as supervising physicians. At last month's Executive Council meeting, the Council approved the project developed by the NCPA Supervision Task Force--*A Psychiatrist's Toolkit: Supervising NPs and PAs*.

This toolkit was designed with two purposes in mind: to encourage more psychiatrists to consider providing supervision for NPs and PAs

and to help psychiatrists provide effective oversight. This document collects and puts into one place the tools necessary to provide a strong supervision program—licensing board requirements, suggestions for structured clinical supervision meetings, templates for forms and agreements, and resources to make the supervisory experience a rich one that is mutually beneficial to the physician, the NP/PA, and the patients they care for together.

The NC Medical Board has stringent expectations that physicians who work in supervisory or collaborative arrangements with other licensed healthcare professionals maintain the ultimate responsibility to assure that high quality care is provided to every patient. There is the expectation that the physician provide adequate oversight. The Supervising Toolkit is designed to provide guidance, information, and suggestions for how to do that well.

The introduction of the toolkit is timely. NC's Division of Medical Assistance is currently considering requirements that nurse practitioners who provide psychiatric care in Medicaid must be certified as Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners. Many NPs are opposed to this requirement. Having more psychiatrists who are willing and able to provide effective supervision to NPs is one solution to the issue.

The NCPA Task Force members have extensive experience working

with NPs and PAs in various settings. The toolkit features vignettes from psychiatrists who work in various settings—solo practice, a major urban health care system, and a small community hospital. Task Force Chair **Donald Buckner, M.D., D.F.A.P.A** said "We couldn't have completed this document without the help of the NP and PA professionals we work with in our practices. They gave us guidance and feedback along the way. We are also grateful for the help we received from the attorneys from Allied World and the North Carolina Medical Board."

The toolkit can be found on the NCPA website at www.ncpsychiatry.org/supervising. Members of the task force are available to help answer any questions that the toolkit may not have addressed. They are: **Don Buckner, M.D., Kim Dansie, M.D., Sid Hossieni, D.O., Ph.D.,** and **Rodney Villanueva, M.D.**

It is our belief is that psychiatrists are willing to meet the supervision needs of our NP/PA colleagues so that together we can provide excellent care to our patients. The solution to a physician shortage should not be substituting other professionals in their place. The solution to a shortage of psychiatrists is to embrace the opportunity to use our training and expertise to oversee and guide treatment by our NP/PA colleagues and improve patients' access to quality care. 🌱