

## Psychiatric-Mental Health Advanced Practice Nurses (PMH APRNs):

- Deliver mental health care and substance use services to children, adults, and older adults.
- Prescribe medication and administer psychotherapy.
- Have masters or doctoral degrees in nursing.



## PMH APRNs make a proven difference in mental health and wellness with:

- Excellent patient outcomes
- High consumer satisfaction
- Cost-effective care

## PMH-APRNs work in urban and rural settings across the country, such as:

- Private practices
- Hospitals
- Community mental health centers
- Primary care offices
- WDWHD)HHDDWH

*“I am an advocate for reducing stigma and improving access to care. Mental health matters!”*

– Helene Vossos, ARNP, DNP, PMHNP-BC  
on her role as a PMH APRN



## Psychiatric-Mental Health Advanced Practice Registered Nurses




For more information, please contact:

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**PMH APRNs**  
*Making a Difference in  
Mental Health & Wellness*





# What is a Psychiatric-Mental Health Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (PMH APRN)?

A PMH APRN is a nurse with graduate-level training who provides mental health care and promotes mental health across the lifespan. PMH APRNs assess, diagnose and treat individuals and families who have psychiatric and/or addictive disorders. They also help those at risk to prevent the development of these disorders.

PMH APRNs use a range of skills to provide holistic care, including prescribing medication and providing individual, family and group therapy. Instead of just treating an illness, PMH APRNs take time to partner with a patient to help him or her achieve his/her own recovery and wellness goals.

PMH APRNs work in a variety of health care settings and practices and are eligible for reimbursement through private insurers, HMOs, PPOs, Medicare and Medicaid.

## Licensure

PMH APRNs practice under the rules and regulations of the state in which they are licensed.

PMH APRNs may be licensed in two different roles:

- Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)
- Psychiatric Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist (PMHCNS).

Both roles require advanced education and development of clinical expertise beyond that required of registered nurses.

**Both PMH NPs and PMH CNSs share the same core skills.** They are both educated in research, systems leadership, and direct patient care skills needed to provide psychiatric evaluations and treatment. Both licenses require advanced education and clinical knowledge beyond that required of registered nurses.



## Proven Expertise in Mental Health

Both PMH CNSs and PMH NPs meet high standards for licensure and certification. PMH APRNs take a national certification examination to validate their expertise. This certification is designated with the initials BC (Board Certified) at the end of the title (e.g., PMHNP-BC). PMH APRNs must continually enhance their expertise with continuing education to maintain their professional credentials.

## Among the many important mental health services they provide, PMH APRNs:

- Assess, diagnose, and treat psychiatric and other mental health disorders.
- Order and interpret diagnostic studies such as lab-work.
- Provide psychotherapy for individuals, groups & families.
- Prescribe and monitor the effects of psychiatric medications.
- Provide direct patient care to persons in the hospital.
- Coordinate patient care and provide case management.
- Collaborate with physicians & other health professionals.
- Provide education and consultation services to nurses and other mental health professionals.
- Design and conduct research to improve mental health care.

## PMH APRNs deliver holistic, personalized mental health care as they:

- Integrate biological, psychological, social, and spiritual elements to treat the whole person.
- Teach people how to manage their mental health and improve their overall health.
- Emphasize health education, wellness promotion, and prevention of disease.

## How do I become a PMH APRN?

To become a PMH APRN you will need to:

1. Obtain an entry-level nursing degree that leads to licensure as a registered nurse.
3. Obtain a Master of Science in Nursing or doctoral degree in advanced practice psychiatric nursing from an accredited nursing program.
4. Pass the American Nurses Credentialing Center board certification examination for Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (PMH NP).
5. Renew your certification every five years, meeting clinical practice and continuing education requirements.

To find accredited psychiatric-mental health nursing graduate programs, please visit [www.apna.org/GraduatePrograms](http://www.apna.org/GraduatePrograms).

## What is the job outlook for PMH APRNs?

The outlook for PMH APRNs is excellent! As with all nursing specialties, there is a shortage of psychiatric-mental health advanced practice nurses. According to Health eCareers, PMHNPs were the #2 most in demand APRN position in the first quarter of 2015. And the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics expects the demand for APRNs to grow approximately 31% over the next decade, much faster than the national average for all occupations<sup>1</sup>. The rate of pay to expect as a PMH APRN will depend on where you work, your level of experience and any additional certifications you obtain.

1. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014-15 Edition, Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, and Nurse Practitioners, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/nurse-anesthetists-nurse-midwives-and-nurse-practitioners.htm> (visited August 11, 2015).



*I am passionate about recovery and am honored to assist those struggling with mental health issues and addiction and partner with them in the opportunity to grow and transform their lives."*

— Dawn Copas, NP on her role as a PMH APRN