



Let's compare

NJ APNs | PAs

Advanced Practice Nurse (APN)

Physician Assistant (PA)



Masters degree or higher

Masters degree or higher



Educated with **patient-centered model** focused on physical assessment, pathophysiology, pharmacology, and diagnostic and management decision-making using a competency-based, specialty-focused nursing curriculum

Educated with **disease-centric model** focused on disease pathology, diagnosis, and treatment using a physician-modeled, generalist medical curriculum



Graduate clinical education is direct, hands-on patient care in a **focused specialty** / RN licensure prerequisite (2-4 years of training/experience)

Graduate clinical education is direct, hands-on patient care as a **generalist** / Patient care experience may be required



MSN Degree and Advanced Practice Nursing National Certification Examination in focused specialty required for APN licensure with NJ Board of Nursing

MS Degree and Physician Assistant National Certification required for PA licensure with NJ State Board of Medical Examiners



Must complete formal education and new certification to change specialties

Have “lateral mobility” to change specialties but will need on-the-job training



Full Practice Authority is where APNs practice without mandated contractual physician involvement under sole authority of Board of Nursing

Optimal Team Practice is the removal of administrative barriers and allowing healthcare teams to determine PA scope of practice based on education, training, and experience



What is an APN in NJ?

What is an APN?

APNs are advanced practice nurses. This includes nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists and certified registered nurse anesthetists. A registered professional nurse who wishes to practice as an advanced practice nurse shall:

- Possess a current New Jersey registered professional nurse license in good standing or hold a registered professional nurse multistate license from a state which is part of the Nurse Licensure Compact; and
- Be certified by the Board as an advanced practice nurse

(NJ Board of Nursing Regulation 13:37 -7.1)

How many APNs are in NJ?

There are 19,221 APNs actively licensed in NJ but about 27% are licensed in other states (NJCCN, 2026)

What education does an APN have?

Masters degree or higher competency-based education builds upon the prerequisite RN training and licensure. APNs are educated with **nursing, patient-centered holistic model** focused on physical assessment, pathophysiology, pharmacology, and diagnostic and management decision-making. Course content may be delivered in-person or online, but the graduate clinical education is direct, hands-on patient care in a **focused specialty area**.

APNs in NJ must successfully complete an examination in an **advanced practice nursing specialty** credentialed by a national certifying agency, that is accredited by the American Board of Nursing Specialties and/or the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NJ Board of Nursing Regulation 13:37 -7.1)

What does a NP do?

Nurse practitioners (84% of NJ APNs) provide a full range of primary, acute and specialty health care services, including: ordering, performing and interpreting diagnostic tests such as lab work and x-rays.; diagnosing and treating acute and chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, infections and injuries; prescribing medications and other treatments; managing patients' overall care; counseling/educating patients on disease prevention and positive health and lifestyle choices

What does a CRNA do?

Certified registered nurse anesthetists (9% of NJ APNs) play a vital role in successful surgeries and making other medical procedures pain-free with safe, high-quality, patient-centered care. They reassure and comfort patients before, during, and after medical procedures

What does a CNS do?

Clinical Nurse Specialists (4% of NJ APNs) typically focus on optimizing organizational systems related to patient outcomes, staff education, and/or specialized consultation