



Increasing Rural Maine's Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Workforce



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Needs Assessment

The need for primary care nurse practitioners reflects Maine's demographics. All 16 Maine counties have designated Medically Underserved Populations; 15 of the 16 have designated Health Professional Shortage Areas, and nine of the 16 are designated Medically Underserved Populations Low Income (HRSA, 2022).

60% of Maine's population lives in rural areas marked by isolation and poverty, chronic disease, and an opioid and substance use epidemic. Maine is also the oldest state in the nation, and the needs of an aging population dominate primary care environments (Associated Press, 2018).

UMaine School of Nursing Response

The cost of education and missed work time is often a barrier for nurses to advance their careers. The UMaine School of Nursing was awarded a competitive, 4-year \$1.9 million grant in 2023 to strengthen its Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) program, with a focus on the care of vulnerable patients in rural, underserved areas. This Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant is titled Advanced Nursing Education Workforce program (ANEW).



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Advanced Nursing Education Workforce Program (ANEW)

The ANEW program's overarching goal is simply to **increase the number of FNPs prepared to provide primary care services**, including mental health and substance use disorder care, and/or inclusive reproductive health. FNP trainees are recruited from their communities and receive tuition and other financial support to ensure degree completion. Individual financial awards range \$18,000 - \$25,000 per academic year.

Curriculum enhancements and continuing education opportunities for students, faculty, and clinical preceptors have been developed to address emerging rural health needs and develop a state-wide network to support population health.



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Trainee Outcomes

FNP cohort sizes have increased ~ 66% to their maximum capacity compared to the 3 years pre-grant with the addition of ANEW resources, namely tuition and stipends.

As of May 2024, 7 trainees have graduated, 23 trainees are matriculated, and recruitment is ongoing.

60% (3/5) of employed ANEW trainee graduates are providing care to rural and/or underserved Mainers.

Faculty and Preceptor Outcomes

An ambulatory preceptor-training module has been developed with a state-wide pilot launching in Spring 2024.

Through sponsored programs and continuing education grants, preceptors and community providers have received education on manual-based cognitive behavioral psychoeducation, providing disability-inclusive care, telehealth best-practices, integrated behavioral health, and addiction medicine.

References

Associated Press. (2018, September 14). *Census: Maine's population still the oldest in the nation*. Maine Public. Retrieved April 3, 2023, from <https://www.mainepublic.org/maine/2018-09-14/census-maines-population-still-the-oldest-in-the-nation>

Health Resources and Services Administration. (2022). *MUA find*. <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/mua-find>