

# Doctor Nurse?

*As the field of nursing evolves, so do the letters after our names*

While I waited at a local eatery before a doctor's appointment, I noticed a small group of nursing students engaged in a boisterous and animated discussion. They talked about an upcoming exam, their instructors' differing teaching styles, and so forth, but what really caught my attention was the comment of one student regarding the new degree, the 'Doctor Nurse' — and had they ever heard of anything so silly?

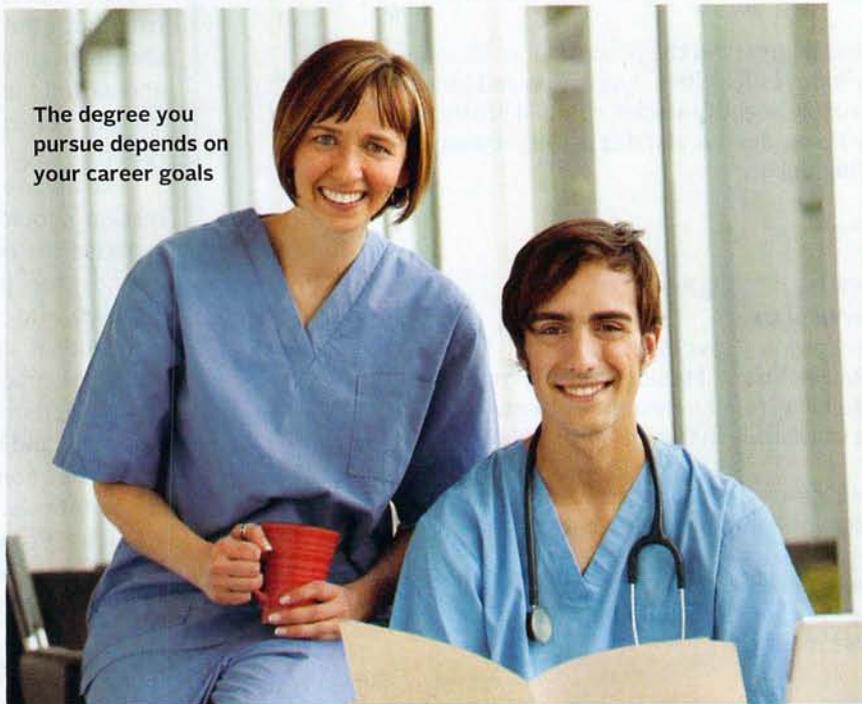
'Doctor Nurse' does sound silly and contradictory, but there is indeed a whole new practice doctorate available for nurses, bringing us up to degree parity with other healthcare disciplines like audiology, dentistry, pharmacology, physical therapy and psychology.

### The Nursing Doctorate: A Short History

In the early 1900s, the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree was created to prepare nursing leaders to become educators and specialists in curricular change.

In the 1970s, the nursing world saw the rise of the Doctor in Philosophy (Ph.D.). The Ph.D. in Nursing was designed to advance the science of the discipline through research, and continues to be recognized as the highest level in scholarly achievement. If a nurse wants to pursue a research career at an esteemed university or the National Institutes of Health, a Ph.D. will open the door.

Also around this time, there was a proliferation of advanced degrees with a practice emphasis, namely the Doctor of Nursing Science (DNSc, DNS or DSN), which emphasized clinical proficiency, although students were still required to perform scholarly research. A splinter of this degree was the Doctor of Nursing (ND), aimed at preparing for clinical leadership.



The degree you pursue depends on your career goals

Since nursing appears to always be in search of the next best way to define itself, leaders and opinion makers didn't stop there. Most recently we've seen the rise of the Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP), which focuses on research utilization for improved delivery of care, patient outcomes and clinical systems management, or to prepare the nurse for a leadership role in nursing management and healthcare administration.

With all these choices available, it didn't take long for the academics to realize that some streamlining needed to occur. So today's terminal degree in nursing is moving towards only two arms of study: Ph.D., the academic and research-oriented degree (phasing out the DNSc, DNS and DSN), and DNP, the practice-oriented or professional terminal degree (replacing the ND).

### Resistance from Physicians

The DNP is generating some controversy, especially with nursing's primary partner in healthcare: physicians.

Advanced practice nurses are no stranger to resistance from various state and national physicians groups. For example, in February, the California Medical Association and the California Society of Anesthesiologists sued the State of California over recently passed regulation that would allow Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA) to administer anesthesia without the supervision of a physician.

So it wasn't surprising when the Congress of Delegates from the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) at their September meeting requested the AAFP fund a study comparing the practices of primary care physicians and nurse practitioners (NP).

Their request focused on the very specific goal of evaluating the quality of existing studies that compare the two groups of healthcare providers, in terms of patient outcomes and cost effective-

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evolves, it will bump up against the job responsibilities of physicians and other medical professionals, and the boundaries will begin to blur.

Even though nursing can trace its

advance practice nurse or nurse practitioner? Or do you educate the next generation of nursing students?

In order to make the right educational choice to maximize your career

## The DNP brings nursing to degree parity with audiology, dentistry, pharmacology, physical therapy and psychology

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Alternate delegate William Thrift, MD, of Prescott, Arizona, argued that further analysis was necessary. He went on to state that NPs in Arizona need only 600 hours of clinical practice to practice independently compared to 12,000 hours for primary care physicians. "Yet in Arizona," he said, "they can do the same work."

### The Profession Evolves

The point is that as nursing practice

roots back to Catholic monks who provided care to the sick during the Dark Ages, as a profession in America it can be considered rather young. The first nursing licensure law was passed by North Carolina in 1903, making nursing just a little over 100 years old. So historically nursing is a relatively new field and as such, goes through spurts of growing pains as it moves towards a platform of maturity.

### Career Options

If you choose to follow the conventional path of associate or bachelor to RN, and then onto a Masters of Nursing, you will have a plethora of choices for career advancement. Do you remain at the bedside or venture into management and administration? Do you become an

goals, keep in mind that the most basic difference between the Ph.D. and DNP is as simple as scholarly research vs. clinical practice.

If you dream of making a groundbreaking advancement in nursing research at a university such as John Hopkins, University of Pennsylvania, or UCLA, then only a Ph.D. in nursing will do; if you want to pursue a more independent practice or make a mark on nursing administration and leadership, then it's the DNP you need. Either way, you'll be a Doctor Nurse! **WN**



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## Comparison of the DNP and Ph.D. in Nursing Programs

Characteristic	DNP Degree Program	Ph.D. in Nursing Program
Objectives	The practice of clinical nursing at the highest level	The conduct of research for the advancement of nursing science
Curricular Emphasis	Analytical methods for evidence-based practice, organizational and systems leadership and management, and the translation of research to improve practice	Theoretical, methodological and analytic approaches to discovery, testing, application and dissemination of new knowledge
Program Outcome	Nurse practitioner, nurse administrator, nurse educator in clinical practice or professional education settings; eligibility for national certification examination	Nurse scientist in an academic or research-intensive settings
Final Scholarly Product	Evidence-based, population-level practice, health or policy improvement project	Original research

Source: The Medical University of South Carolina, Rattner, 2007

# NURSE CALENDAR

Compiled by Christine Tarlecki

## November 16; 9am-1pm

### Dealing with Difficult and Dangerous Clients

9465 Farnham Street, San Diego

Sponsored by Mental Health Systems, Inc., a non-profit agency established in 1978.

Cost & CE: \$40; up to 10 contact hours

Contact: Terri Belmonte

Tel: (858) 573-2600

Email: [contact@mhsinc.org](mailto:contact@mhsinc.org) • Web: [www.mhsinc.org](http://www.mhsinc.org)

Learn and understand the process of crisis intervention; identify motives for client aggression and how to respond appropriately; Identify suicide risk and protective factors; identify homicidal risk and discuss regulations related to protecting public.

## November 17; 9am-2pm

### RN Interview Day

Providence Holy Cross Medical Center  
15031 Rinaldi Street, Mission Hills, CA 91345  
North Building, Human Resources Dept.  
Parking is available in the lot off of Rinaldi

For more information about our event, please call our recruiter; Gus Palmos at (818) 496-4592

This open house is for experienced RNs only. Nurses who attend can expect to be interviewed by both a recruiter and nurse manager.

## November 29 & 30

### Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course (ENPC)

Childrens Hospital Campus  
4650 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90027  
Page Conference Room

Sponsored by Childrens Hospital Los Angeles.  
Cost & CE: CHLA employees \$180, non-employees \$280;  
15 contact hours  
Contact: Lillian Hernandez  
Tel: (323) 361-5962 • Web: [www.chla.org](http://www.chla.org)

The ENPC is a 16-hour course presented by the Emergency Nurses Association. Content is delivered through lectures and skills stations.

Email [Editor@WorkingNurse.com](mailto:Editor@WorkingNurse.com) to let us know about your event.

# Healthcare Reform Update

## What nurses need to know now

By Geneviève Clavreul, RN, Ph.D.

### > Expanded Nursing Scope of Practice

On October 5, 2010, the Institute of Medicine issued their report: "The Future of Nursing, Leading Change, Advancing Health."

The report has already met with mixed responses from both the nursing and medical community. "Nurses should be fully engaged with other health professionals and assume leadership roles in redesigning care in the United States," said the committee that wrote the report.

"To ensure its members are well-prepared, the profession should institute residency training for nurses, increase the percentage of nurses who attain a bachelor's degree to 80 percent by 2020, and double the number who pursue doctorates. And regulatory and institutional obstacles — including limits on nurses' scope of practice — should be removed so that the health system can reap the full benefit of nurses' training, skills, and knowledge in patient care."

In brief, some of the recommendations of the report are as follows:

- At least 80 percent of nurses in the U.S. receive bachelor's degrees within the next 10 years;
- Nurses gain more autonomy in practice and take leadership roles on healthcare teams for roles such as prescribing drugs and diagnosing disease with limited or no physician oversight, and;
- Urges top-down federal regulation to help achieve some of the report's stated goals.

### > Legal Updates

A federal judge in Florida refused to dismiss a multi-state lawsuit filed against the federal government that challenges the healthcare reform law. U.S. District Court Judge Roger Vinson threw out some of the states' claims, but permitted the argument that Congress exceeded its power by requiring that individuals purchase health insurance or pay a penalty. Meanwhile a federal judge in Michigan ruled that the mandate requiring individuals does not violate the Constitution. **WN**

**NOTE:** Each issue, Working Nurse will keep you informed as the "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" is enacted.



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