



Essentia Health

ANE-NPRF Newsletter

December 2025



The purpose of this newsletter is to keep stakeholders updated on the progress and accomplishments of the Advanced Nursing Education-Nurse Practitioner Residency Fellowship (ANE-NPRF) grant.

The four-year, \$2.3 million federal grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration is an expansion of Essentia Health's current Transition to Practice program and provides new graduate nurse practitioners (NPs) clinical and academic enhancement for a 12-month fellowship program in rural and/or underserved populations.

Mission Statement

To expand Essentia Health's Transition to Practice program further enhancing the competencies of NP and PA fellows, increasing access to primary care and improving the health of rural and underserved populations.

The collaboration between North Dakota State University (NDSU) School of Nursing and Essentia Health, a large regional health system covering North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin is better preparing new NP graduates for rural care practice through enhanced didactic content, simulation, and immersive clinical experiences. Although the grant stipulates funding for NPs, physician assistants (PAs) are also participating in the fellowship.

The third year of the fellowship started in October. This newsletter highlights the current projects and achievements thus far.

[Click here to read about the accomplishments of the 2019-2023 Advance Nursing Education](#)

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FELLOWS: YEAR 2



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Jamestown, ND



April Buescher,
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Jessica Cobban,
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Stacia Heisler,
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Park Rapids, MN



Heather Holm,
APRN, CNP
Spooner, WI



Udara Rajagura,
PA-C
Spooner, WI

ANE-NPRF Program Priorities:

1. Behavioral Health
2. Rural Clinical Readiness
3. Maternal Health Care
4. Provider Wellness and Resiliency

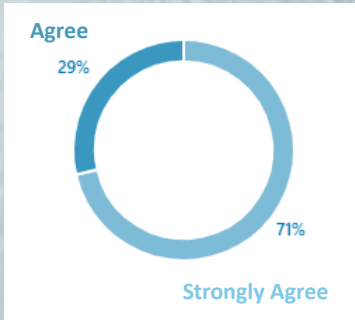
In September, the fellows from year 2 completed the fellowship program. In total, these fellows served **16,507** patients in rural and medically underserved areas throughout MN, ND, and WI. Fellows completed **68** specialty rotations with **41** different specialists and providers. **100%** of fellows reported they would be extremely likely to recommend an APP fellowship program to a newly graduated APP. **100%** of the fellows were retained at the rural Essentia Health clinics where they completed their fellowship.

Highlight of Fellowship Program

“I would say the resources and education provided was of such great benefit, and the honor of being chosen for this opportunity. For me, it was so helpful in moments of self-doubt to remind myself that although being new to practice has been challenging, I am where I belong.”



I feel a sense of belonging at Essentia Health





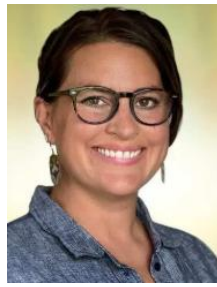
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Alexa Meyer,
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Dani Reno,
APRN, CNP
Duluth, MN

FELLOWS: YEAR 3

In October, our year 3 fellows started their fellowship. We met in Baxter, MN and fellows attended a half day workshop on resiliency, wellbeing and setting boundaries facilitated by grant team members Carrie Nelson, a certified resiliency trainer, Debra Steen, and Mykell Barnacle. Fellows followed their resiliency training with a 2-day intensive procedural workshop. Three other newly graduated Essentia Health Advanced Practice Providers also attended.

The workshop was focused on orthopedics in primary care facilitated by Aaron Lindstrom, FNP-C, an orthopedic specialist at Lake Region Healthcare in Fergus Falls, MN. Dean Gross and Steve Palmer, PA-C also facilitated sessions on advanced clinical procedures including fishhook removal; suturing; punch biopsies; incision and drainage; nail trephination; toenail removal; and hemorrhage control techniques.

In November, Kerri Benning facilitated a workshop on clinic efficiency. Kerri is a faculty member at NDSU School of Nursing in Bismarck, ND and practices rural family medicine at the Underwood and Washburn, ND clinics.



Advisory Board

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(Essentia)

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Project Manager)

WHO TO CONTACT



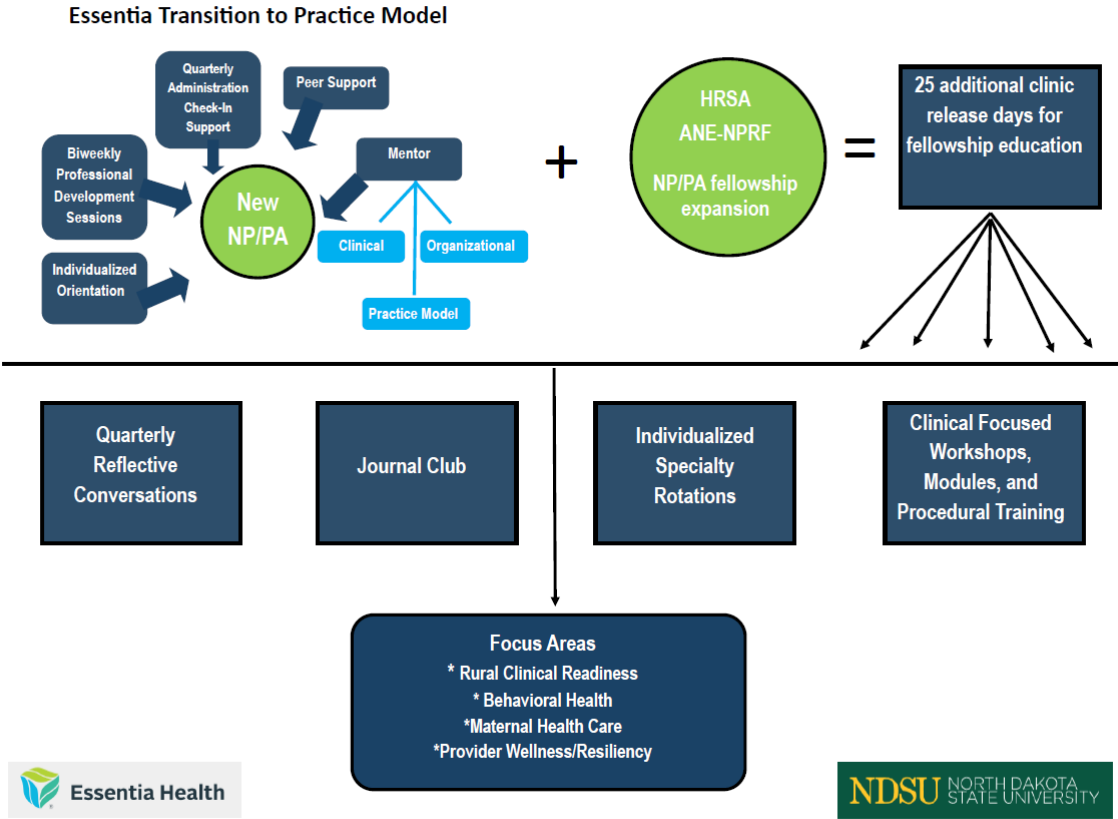
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Qualifications

- Candidates: Graduates of ANY* Nurse Practitioner Program who have obtained a certification and license to practice no longer than 18 months before the start of the fellowship program, with a commitment to practice in a rural area. *Graduates do not have to be NDSU graduates.
- Newly graduated NPs hired by Essentia in rural, underserved areas will be eligible for the fellowship program each year.
- Unlike most fellowship programs that have an application process, fellows are selected by primary care leaders and the Transition to Practice team to participate yearly based on clinic need.

Structure

- 12 month, salaried position.
- Specialty clinical rotations based on fellow needs and interests.
- In person and virtual educational opportunities related to focus areas and other complex clinical challenges for rural NPs.