

Primary Care for the 21st Century

Ensuring a Quality, Physician-led Team for Every Patient

The U.S. is moving to a new primary care model built around patients and delivered by teams, known as the **Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH)**.



What is it?

- Each person has an ongoing relationship with a **personal physician** who provides continuous, comprehensive care
- **Physician leads a team** of professionals to care for patients



- Personal physician **coordinates with other health care providers within the PCMH** and across the complex health care system



- **Quality and safety** are hallmarks, and patients and their families actively participate in decision making



- **Enhanced access to care** through open and same-day scheduling, expanded clinical hours, and new options for communication

Can a nurse lead the team?

Nurses are vital members of the team, but **nurse ≠ doctor**

Years of Education and Training¹



Doctors bring broader and deeper expertise to the diagnosis and treatment of all health problems. Doctors are trained to provide complex diagnoses and develop comprehensive plans to treat them.

3 out of 4

patients prefer to be treated by a physician even if it takes longer to get an appointment and even if it costs more.²

Why do we need it?



- **Fewer** emergency room visits
- **Fewer** hospital admissions and readmissions
- **Shorter** hospital stays³

How do we make the PCMH a reality for everyone?

1 We have to fix the primary care workforce shortage.

45,000 too few primary care **physicians** by 2020⁴

AND

260,000 too few registered **nurses** by 2025⁵

2 We need more doctors, and we need more nurses, and we need them working together in teams.



Studies show the ideal practice ratio of nurse practitioners to physicians is approximately **4 to 1**.⁶ At this ratio, everyone can have a physician-led team, and the primary care shortage can be eliminated.

3 How can we train more primary care doctors?



- Increase federal funding for primary care physician education.



- Help medical students pay back or defray medical school debt.



- Improve primary care physician payment so students will consider primary care careers.

¹ Martin, Greg. "Education and Training: Family Physicians and Nurse Practitioners." Web. 12 June 2012.

² American Medical Association. "Patient support for physician-led health care teams." September 2012.

³ "Proof in Practice: A Compilation of Patient Centered Medical Home Pilot and Demonstration Projects." Web. 12 June 2012.

⁴ https://www.aamc.org/download/150584/data/physician_shortages_factsheet.pdf

⁵ Buerhas, Peter I., David I. Auerbach, and Douglas O. Staiger.

The Recent Surge in Nurse Employment: Causes and Implications. Web. 12 June 2012.

⁶ *Investing in Health.* New York: Published for the World Bank, Oxford UP, 1993. Print.

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