

Oregon State Board of Nursing Interpretive Statement

The Title of Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN)s in Oregon

Purpose: Many nurses contact the Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN) and ask if APRN is a recognized and a permitted title and in what order it should be placed in their signature line.

National History of the Title Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN):

The concept of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) evolved in the mid-20th century in response to a growing need for more specialized and skilled nursing professionals. APRNs are highly educated and experienced registered nurses who have obtained advanced degrees and additional competencies to provide advanced healthcare services. The term "Advanced Practice Nurse" was first used in the 1960s to describe nurses with advanced education and clinical preparation.

The role of APRNs gained recognition and legitimacy over time as they demonstrated their ability to deliver high-quality, cost-effective care in various healthcare settings. The development of formal APRN education programs, accreditation standards, and certification processes further solidified the role of APRNs in the healthcare system.

States Using the Title Advanced Practice Registered Nurse:

The title "Advanced Practice Registered Nurse" is commonly used in the United States. APRNs are recognized and authorized to practice in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. However, it is essential to note that specific regulations and scopes of practice for APRNs vary from state to state. These variations include differences in prescription authority, independent practice, and practice requirements.

APRN Licensure Type in the United States:

In the United States, **an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse is not a separate licensure type**. Instead, it is an umbrella term that encompasses several specialized roles, each with its own professional certification and educational requirements. The four main APRN roles are:

1. **Nurse Practitioner (NP):** NPs provide primary and specialized healthcare services to patients of all ages. They can diagnose, treat, and prescribe medications within their scope of practice.
2. **Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM):** CNMs provide care to women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. They also offer reproductive healthcare and family planning services.
3. **Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA):** CRNAs administer anesthesia and provide anesthesia-related care during surgical and medical procedures.
4. **Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS):** CNSs are experts in a specific area of nursing practice, such as oncology or psychiatric-mental health, and provide advanced clinical expertise and education to patients and other healthcare professionals.

To become an APRN, the applicant must first complete a graduate or higher-level degree in Nursing, pass the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) and become certified in an APRN specialty through a national certifying organization.

RN licensure is a prerequisite to APRN licensure/ authorization. This means that the advanced practice registered nurse will hold the RN and the APRN credential simultaneously.

The Nurse Compact:

Oregon is currently not a member of the nurse licensure compact (NLC). In US states and jurisdictions that have enacted the NLC, an RN or LPN who holds an NLC multistate license (issued by their state of residence) can practice in-person or provide telenursing services to patients in other NLC states/jurisdictions without obtaining additional licenses.

There are currently 41 US states and jurisdictions that belong to the NLC. The APRN who holds a multistate RN license can only engage in practice as an RN with patients who physically reside in another NLC state/jurisdiction. There is no authority for the APRN who holds a multistate RN license to practice as an APRN in another NLC state or jurisdiction.

Currently, there is no operational APRN Licensure Compact.

History of APRNs in Oregon:

1. Early Recognition and Licensure: The recognition of APRNs in Oregon began with the establishment of the first nurse practitioner (NP) program at the University of Colorado in 1965. Shortly after, nurse practitioners started to emerge in Oregon and other states as a response to the increasing demand for primary care providers, particularly in underserved rural areas. As the role of NPs gained recognition and credibility, Oregon took steps to formalize their practice.

2. Legislative and Regulatory Developments: In the 1970s and 1980s, Oregon made progress in recognizing and regulating the practice of APRNs. The state's Board of Nursing began defining the scope of practice and requirements for APRNs. These efforts were essential in establishing the legal framework for APRN practice in Oregon. In 2015, the Board passed legislation officially recognizing and defining the term "APRN" as a protected title in Oregon Regulatory Statute.

- **ORS 678.025 Use of title "Advanced Practice Registered Nurse."**

An individual may not use the title "Advanced Practice Registered Nurse" or the abbreviation "APRN" unless the individual is:

(1) A clinical nurse specialist;

(2) A nurse practitioner; or

(3) A certified registered nurse anesthetist as defined in ORS 678.245

3. Oregon State Board of Nursing: The Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN) plays a significant role in regulating nursing practice, including that of APRNs, in the state. The OSBN establishes licensure requirements, defines scopes of practice, and ensures that nursing professionals meet educational and certification standards to practice as APRNs.

4. APRN Education and Certification: To become an APRN in Oregon, nurses must complete a master's or doctoral program in their chosen specialty, obtain national certification through a recognized certifying body, and apply for APRN licensure through the Oregon State Board of Nursing. The state continues to support APRN education programs and encourages nurses to pursue advanced degrees to meet the growing demand for healthcare services.

Nursing Signature Line Recommendations:

1. There are no specific rules regarding signature in Oregon. Best practice is to clearly identify your credentials, so clients and additional stakeholders can easily understand the exact nature of your position and role.
2. In Oregon, *you are licensed by APRN Specialty Type*

- CNS
 - CRNA
 - NP inclusive of NPs specializing in Certified Nurse Midwifery (CNM)
2. The American Nursing Credentialing Center (ANCC) recommends using your highest earned degree(s), followed by your licensure type and additional board certifications.
- Highest earned degree, license type, certified (C) for CRNAs and CNSs, for NP specialty types are either (C-certified) or (BC-board certified).

Examples:

1. John Doe, DNP, APRN-CRNA
2. Jane Doe, MSN, APRN-CNS
3. John Doe, MSN, APRN-PMHNP-BC
4. Jane Doe, DNP, APRN-FNP-C

References:

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). (2021). *APRN Consensus Model*. [Link](#)
- American Nursing Credentialing Center (ANCC). (2023). [Link](#)
- National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN). (2021). *APRN Prescriptive Authority*. [Link](#)
- National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN). (2023). *RN compact Practicing Jurisdictions*. [Link](#)
- Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. (NPO). (2021). *Historic Accomplishments for Oregon’s Nurse Practitioners*. [Link](#)
- Oregon Regulatory Statute *Section 678.025 — Use of title “Advanced Practice Registered Nurse.”*, [Link](#)

Authority for Approval: ORS 678, [Link](#)

History of Document: Document Adopted 9.21.2023

The Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN) is authorized by Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 678 to exercise general supervision over the practice of nursing in Oregon to include regulation of nursing licensure, education, and practice in order to assure that the citizens of Oregon receive safe and effective care. The OSBN further interprets statute and rule and issues opinions in the form of policies and interpretive statements, which are advisory in nature and used as guidelines for safe nursing practice.