

As we look toward 2030, Advanced Practice Providers (APP) growth will continue to outpace other clinical roles in medicine due to being one of the fastest-growing segments of the healthcare workforce. Based on 2020 data, APPs constitute, on average, more than one-third of a U.S. healthcare provider organization's clinical workforce. Yet, despite the consistent, rapid growth in the APP workforce, healthcare systems have not seen expected gains in access and revenues.

Post-pandemic, without corresponding increases in patient volume or revenue, operating margins cannot sustain any unsupported cost, according to Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA). However, when leveraged effectively, APPs can provide a significant return on investment by bringing additional operating margins from existing resources without the added expense. Optimizing an organization's APP workforce begins with developing and implementing an intentional, strategic plan and framework.

This work has begun within Norton Children's Medical Group, spearheaded by the Pediatric APP Champions, collaborating with physicians and leadership, and supported by the Office of Advanced Practice (OAP). The OAP's strategic goals align with the vision of our integrated pediatric healthcare network and Norton healthcare system goals. OAP has grown from its infancy into a robust leadership infrastructure that is rare among the country's health centers. The office leadership team is uniquely positioned to advocate for all APPs and is committed to promoting the profession.

The pediatric APP champions have partnered with pediatric operations to leverage APP utilization across the organization by engaging advanced practice providers to assist in redefining care models to support their ability to expand access and generate additional revenue, which drives operational performance and supports future sustainability. There are 200 employed advanced practice providers within pediatric service lines and 800 employed APPs within Norton Healthcare. As the pediatric APP champions look to the future, they aim to support Norton's mission, vision, and values while elevating the APP role within pediatric service lines. In addition, they will work towards creating a general and subspecialty practice program that effectively and efficiently integrates new hire APPs while equipping the APP to provide evidence-based and safe patient care. To achieve these goals the pediatric APP champions, intend to provide clear and consistent communication, formalize a structured onboarding for all new APP hires and look at beginning pediatric APP fellowship programs. These efforts aim to develop a top-of-license practicing APP workforce and improve recruitment, retention, and engagement at Norton Children's Medical Group.

In upcoming newsletters, we will introduce the Pediatric APP team and continue to highlight the great work the advanced practice providers are doing within the pediatric service lines.