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What is a Physician Assistant and/or a Nurse Practitioner?

Physician Assistant

A Physician Assistant is a highly-trained, licensed individual who assists the physician in both the office and the operating room. The concept of Physician Assistants was developed in the military after World War II. In 1965, the concept was integrated into civilian medicine and is now a popular and growing practice. A Physician Assistant works under the supervision of a physician to examine, diagnose and treat patients; becoming an important link between the patient and the doctor. The use of Physician Assistants by medical groups in Tulsa continues to grow.

Nurse Practitioner

A Nurse Practitioner is a Master's prepared, highly-trained, licensed individual who assists the physician to provide quality healthcare in the office and operating room. The concept of Nurse Practitioners was developed in Colorado in 1965 by Dr. Silver. He found that many children lacked appropriate healthcare and worked with Loretta Ford (a nurse educator) to develop a Nurse Practitioner education program, and thus improved access for the pediatric population. Since that time, Nurse Practitioners have been widely accepted and continue to provide direct patient services to all age groups. The care that NPs provide is very good according to numerous government and private studies. In fact, the U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment says, "Nurse Practitioners provide care whose quality is equivalent to that of care provided by physicians." Currently over 49,000 NPs have been trained in the United States.

Are these types of providers covered under my insurance?

During a surgical procedure, your doctor may require the services of a Physician Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, or another physician. The Federal Government, through Medicare and Medicaid, as well as Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) recognize the need for Physician Assistant and Nurse Practitioner services and encourages their use. However, some insurance companies have not kept pace with the changes. If you have questions concerning insurance coverage, please contact your employer or insurance company prior to your surgery to learn how these services are covered under your insurance plan. Please contact your Surgery Scheduler if you feel there is a problem with insurance coverage. With your help, we hope that insurance companies will come to recognize the need for these valuable and cost-effective services.