

What is an Advanced Care Provider? *By Sharon Alguire, PA-C and Sara Barrett, FNP-C*

When you schedule your appointment at Thunderbird Internal Medicine you may be seen by one of our Advanced Care Practitioners, which includes a Nurse Practitioner (NP), a Physician's Assistant (PA), and, of course, your primary care physician. There are times you may not be able to get in to see your primary care physician, so you might wonder what the titles of NP and PA mean and what they are capable of. Rest assured, at Thunderbird Internal Medicine, all physicians, PAs and NP's work with you to coordinate care, manage issues that occur, and collaborate with other physician specialists to solve health problems. Here's a short summary describing what both a Nurse Practitioner and a Physician's Assistant are and the roles they play.

Both NP's and PA's are trained and licensed to care for patients and prescribe medication. They conduct

physical exams, diagnose and treat illness, order tests and offer patient education. They are also able to assist in performing surgery.

A physician's assistant usually begins in an area of healthcare such as an EMT, paramedic, lab tech, nurse, etc. They are also required to take specific courses and have a minimum number of patient contact hours before entering PA schooling. Most of the PA programs are graduate-level programs, but they are all required to meet the same requirements to prepare a person for the certification exam. PAs work with physicians. The amount of autonomy varies on the physician's level of confidence in the PA.

A nurse practitioner starts off as a registered nurse and must earn a bachelor's degree in nursing and also have a certain number of clinical hours before they can apply

to NP school. They typically have approximately 10 years of prior registered nursing experience. Nurse Practitioners follow a patient-centered model, in which they focus on disease prevention and health education. Designed to be independent practitioners, NP's can even have their own clinic.

At Thunderbird we have the strongest confidence in all of our Advanced Care Providers. Each takes pride in providing the best possible care for our patients through physician collaboration and consultation.

The next time you need to be seen for a medical issue and your primary care provider has approved an appointment with an NP or PA, you will now have a better understanding of what each role involves and what they have to offer.

Welcome Dr. Chen-Yang!



Board certified internist Vicky Chen-Yang, MD has joined Thunderbird Internal Medicine in Glendale. She enjoys all aspects of internal medicine, has a special fondness for geriatric patients and a strong background in caring for those with chronic conditions. Fluent in both English and Mandarin Chinese, Dr. Chen-Yang is welcoming new patients at the #C-1 location!

LOCATIONS

Thunderbird Internal Medicine – Glendale
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Thunderbird Internal Medicine - Phoenix
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