What Is An ARNP?

An ARNP is an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner, defined as a nurse with advanced practice skills, having completed graduate-level education with specific training and certification in the diagnosis and management of both common and complex medical conditions.

Unlike nurses with the LPN or RN designations, ARNPs can generally practice medicine without onsite supervision by a physician, order tests, make diagnoses and write prescriptions for many medications.

When hospice patients have been receiving services for almost 6 months, they must be recertified as continuing to be appropriate for hospice care, and they must be recertified each subsequent 60-day period.

This certification may be done by a physician or an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP) who is a member of the Hospice Team. Through a combination of a face-to-face examination of each patient, conversations with family members and/or caregivers, dialogue with other members of the patient’s Hospice Care Team and a review of the patient’s medical record, the ARNP must attest to the patient’s eligibility for continued hospice services.

This assessment includes cognitive, physical and functional abilities as they relate to the progression of the terminal diagnosis of the patient. Sometimes patients improve and may be discharged from hospice services; however, those patients may elect hospice services again as their disease progresses.

The Hospice of Citrus and the Nature Coast ARNP Team includes Jane Griner, Teresa Groover, Michael Hicks and Judiann Porubcan.

Jane Griner, ARNP

In 6th grade, Jane Griner decided to be a nurse, “and I never changed that goal,” she says. “I’ve always had that desire to care for others and the wish to make people’s lives somehow better.” After graduating from a diploma nursing program at Georgia Baptist Hospital School of Nursing, she worked in a specialty hospital while pursuing her bachelor of science in nursing, completed at the Medical College of Georgia in 1974. Jane then moved to Gainesville with the goal of pursuing a master’s degree in nursing at UF. Initially, she worked as an RN at the VA Medical Center, where after 6 months she was one of only two RNs selected to participate in a pilot program designed to prepare RNs for the expanded role of nurse practitioner. Earning her master of science in nursing degree in 1980 and passing national certification in adult health, Jane spent the next 27 years at the VA working in primary care and hematology/oncology. It was in 2008, after retiring from the VA, that Jane came to Hospice of Citrus and the Nature Coast as an ARNP. Jane’s role here includes timely completion of detailed recertification assessments, serving as a clinical consultant for her hospice teammates, and providing emotional support to patients and their loved ones. “I feel that I’m part of a compassionate care team,” she says, “and I consider it a special blessing and opportunity to be there for patients and families.”
Teresa Groover, ARNP

“I just always felt that I would one day be a nurse,” explains Teresa Groover, who played Florence Nightingale in a church play at age 4 and whose mother was a nurse. So when her youngest child started kindergarten, she went to college to become an RN. A transcultural nursing class in her senior year took her to villages in Haiti for 10 days of clinical practice under the guidance of an ARNP. “I knew after that experience that I wanted to be an ARNP,” she states. Graduating from Medical College of Georgia as a family nurse practitioner, Teresa spent 8 years in endocrinology/ internal medicine and then gained additional experience at a spinal surgery center. Impressed by our “patient first” mission, she joined Hospice of Citrus and the Nature Coast in 2011, “and I’ve loved it ever since,” she says. Finding satisfaction as part of the hospice team that helps patients through the end of their life, Teresa also gains a sense of accomplishment in helping families understand what to expect as their loved one nears life’s end and how they can nurture a peaceful transition, assuring them that the patient will be kept comfortable while always being available to them for guidance and support. “Families are very appreciative for hospice, for the help we give them, for the education that we provide and the emotional support as they’re going through probably the most difficult time of their lives,” says Teresa, “and I’m glad to be a part of that.”

Michael Hicks, ARNP

As a high school student, Michael Hicks mopped floors and pushed food carts at a hospital, later inspired by “the guys in Respiratory” and his respiratory-therapist mother to eventually become a registered respiratory therapist, himself. That began his journey in the medical field, which continued with his 1985 graduation as a registered nurse, allowing him to gain additional experience in trauma, open-heart, critical care, pediatric care and intensive care settings. Then, in 2007, he earned a master’s degree as a nurse practitioner from Florida Atlantic University, specializing in family medicine. At that time, he still worked at the same hospital where it all began for him. “When I walked out of there after 32 years, I had my master’s as a nurse practitioner from the help of a great mother and father, a great wife and a great God,” he relates. That 2009 “walk” took him to Putnam County where, after working in private practice with local physicians, a year ago his prayers were answered when Putnam Team Medical Director John Milanick, M.D., tapped him to join hospice. “I just feel honored that I’m able to bring my skills to the table,” says Michael. “That honors not only the patients that I’m serving now but, to a great extent, honors my mother and father. When they both died under hospice care, I was able to be the son and not the nurse practitioner, and that was very much of a comfort for me.”

Judiann Porubcan, ARNP

“I’ve always liked science, and I felt that I could make a difference in people’s lives,” explains Judiann Porubcan. That’s why she pursued a career in nursing, first earning a bachelor of science in nursing degree, passing state boards for her RN and then initially working in pediatrics. To earn her master of science in nursing degree, Judiann graduated from the University of Florida’s ARNP curriculum as one of only four family nurse practitioners in the inaugural Class of 1981. She then pursued post-graduate studies in adult health and geriatrics, becoming board certified in both. An ARNP clinician and administrator at the Veterans Administration for 35 years until retirement, Judiann predominantly performed house calls for homebound veterans. She joined Hospice of Citrus and the Nature Coast as an ARNP in 2013. Here, she conducts extensive medical records reviews, conducts patient recertification visits and combines information from many sources to paint a picture of the patient’s status. Judiann believes that her visits have added value and further support patient education, saying, “Our presence is probably one of the more important things we do, just being present for the patient and the family,” and, “I end my visits asking if they have any questions for me, and frequently they do.” As for herself, she says, “I feel like I’m so fortunate to have a job where I can touch people’s lives every day that I’m working.”