

Nurse Practitioners & Physician Assistants

A Long Island native, Barbara Wagner remembers driving her father, a doctor, in the family car as he made house calls, and seeing just what it means to have first-rate personal interaction with a dedicated physician.

"My dad just loved what he did," she says. That's why after being a registered nurse (RN) for 22 years, Wagner went to Stanford University and became both a nurse practitioner (NP) and a physician assistant (PA).

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Nurse practitioners are registered nurses who have completed additional training and education and are nationally board certified in their specialty as well as being certified by a state nursing board. Physician assistants typically have post graduate degrees and are certified by the state. They are sometimes referred to as mid-levels because their training is between that of a doctor and a nurse.

There are more than 140,000 NPs practicing nationally and 75,000 PAs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, those numbers are expected to grow rapidly over the next decade as health-care establishments try to relieve physicians of routine duties and procedures.

As Wagner, who is both a highly respected NP and PA, explains,



Oroville Hospital

"We diagnose, do formal plan care, do referrals and take care of our patient's needs." The difference is that nurse practitioners and physician assistants are often more readily available than doctors.

Simply put, there are often too many patients and not enough doctors to go around - but at Oroville Hospital a strong team of nurse practitioners and physician assistants has bridged the gap between patients and their doctors, bringing personal care and attention to patients who need it.

"The nurse practitioners and physician assistants have added great value to our hospital. They are intelligent, caring, and provide great quality care to our patients. We are lucky to have them," says Dr. Matthew Fine, Chief Medical Officer and the hospital's director of patient safety.

Another Stanford alum is Paul Robie, Oroville Hospital's director of physician assistants. He came to Oroville in 1982 as a paramedic, planning on staying just a few years - but he fell in love with the community and has remained here ever since.

Robie has since watched his team of PAs grow from two to its current number of 48. "I think we're just a step ahead of the game. We have mid-levels in the emergency room, all of our outpatient clinics, as well as throughout the hospital," he says.

Oroville Hospital's mid-level's are readily available to see patients, are well trained, highly skilled, knowledgeable, and - most important of all -

personally dedicated to providing patients with needed medical care. The kind of care Barbara Wagner watched her father provide. "For my patients, I want to be part of their family with them, and help them stay healthy and continue a happy, healthy life. That's what I'm here for."

