

OSF HealthCare became the first healthcare system in the nation to receive system-wide accreditation for its Advanced Practice Providers (APP) Fellowship. The fellowship brings together newly-licensed advanced practice nurses and physician's assistants for further educating in providing high quality patient care.

Director of Advanced Practice Providers Lisa Pierce said the accreditation is a major achievement for OSF.

"The accreditation process really demonstrates for our community, for our advanced practice providers and for our health care system the quality of program we've built here at OSF," she said. "Not every fellowship is accredited by any organization, so the fact that we are accredited with distinction shows we have a high degree of quality and rigor."

Launched in spring 2016, fellows in the program spend four days of the week at the clinic they were hired and one day a week at the Jump Trading Simulation Lab and Education Center located within OSF Saint Francis Medical Center. While some of the time at Jump is spent in lectures, the focus of the fellowship is on experiential learning.

"We do simulation and skills labs so they can learn the procedural skills they need for primary care," Pierce said. "And sometimes, we have open time for them to talk about the challenges of starting this new role in our health care system."

With an aging population, the demand for physicians in the United States is high: by the year 2030, there will be an estimated [shortage](#) of up to 43,000 primary care physicians. Studies indicate that a large proportion of primary care can be provided by advanced practice nurse and physicians assistants. The APP Fellowship gives advanced providers the skills they need to perform at the highest level of their licensure. This allows physicians to focus on more complex patient needs, increasing both efficiency and quality of care.

Physician Brad Stoecker said the fellowship provides immense benefits for everyone on clinical care teams.

"With the education we're providing, we're really encouraging those APPs to push themselves to become better clinicians and better partners in the care and treatment of their patients," he said.

Vice President of Advanced Practice Providers Melinda Cooling says the accreditation of the fellowship is key to overall OSF long-term strategy.

"One thing we really try to instill in them is to share their knowledge both locally and nationally. We've seen a lot of professional growth in them," she said. "As our OSF strategy continues to develop and we look at new care models, we know our APPs are critical to that."

The fellowship was recognized by the American Nurse Credentialing Center Practice Transition Accreditation Program. Normally, only individual hospitals receive this distinction for their fellowships. OSF is the first health care network to achieve system-wide accreditation. The current class of APPs will complete their fellowship on April 24.