

Ep #111: How NPHub Is Saving Healthcare with Founder, Krish Chopra



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

Sarah Michelle and Anna

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Welcome to the *Real Deal NP Club*. Whether you're hoping to become a real deal nurse practitioner or you already are one, this is the place for you to get the resources you need as you tackle this massive transition into practice. We're your hosts, Sarah Michelle, Chief Nursing Officer of Blueprint Test Prep, and Anna Miller, Director of Nursing Content. And we're here to hang out with you each week like your best friends in the NP space. Let's dive in.

Anna: Hey, hey everyone. It's Anna here and today I have a very, very special guest that I'd like to introduce you all to. So welcome back to our podcast, today we're interviewing Krish, who is the CEO and founder of NPHub. So, do you want to give our listeners just a brief introduction of who you are and what NPHub is for those who don't know?

Krish: Yeah. I'm Krish, so I started NPHub actually back in 2017. My first company we worked with medical students and provided clinical placements, those familiar with the space, and did that for three, four years, 2014 onward. And then eventually found out how glaring and big the need for nurse practitioners were.

It sort of never really dawned on me in my first few years because we helped a few NPs, but never really thought it would be a, you know, I could never imagine most universities don't help their students find clinicals. It just was an oversight. And then when we found out, we realized well, you know what? In this space if we don't do what we do, these students won't graduate, NP students meaning.

And so that's when we made that pivot in 2016, 2017 and then started working since then. And it's sort of like off to the races, you know?

Anna: Absolutely. It is wild how many clinical rotations are so hard to secure. I've been there. When I was in NP school I could not find a pediatric rotation. I had multiple lined up that all fell through and I looked through my whole state, could not find one in the state. I actually ended up using NPHub and going to another state to get my clinical rotation, a state

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where I knew people where I had gone to nursing school, but just so I could graduate on time because it was just wild.

So thank you for creating the service for other students who I know are like me and struggling with that fact of just trying to find that rotation.

Krish: What year did you work with us in?

Anna: Oh man, it was 2019, 2020.

Krish: Okay, got it. So if you liked us back then, we've gotten a lot better since then.

Anna: Yes, yes.

Krish: Yeah.

Anna: Yeah, so speaking of that, how would you say you've gotten better since then and the business has grown even more?

Krish: Oh, I mean, okay, so 2020, 2021, that was like we grew so quickly, everything broke. And so we went through a period where it's like, and during Covid, right? Nothing was working right. And so anytime you did a placement, it was almost like a 50% chance a preceptor would be like, we don't want students right now. And so it was really, really challenging in that interim, in that Covid time.

But how we've gotten better, I would say the thing with us is we're a technology platform, right? And so there's two things that's changed. One, it's that we've grown a lot. So I think last year, I don't have the precise number off the top of my head, I probably should, but we did 3100 clinical placements, just in 2023.

Anna: Wow.

Krish: And it was well over 2000 students who we helped. And so other than a few of the bigger online programs, we sort of have the best, we sort

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of are the largest in terms of finding clinical placements. And I would say the biggest thing that's changed is we have a big quality control process.

So our whole model is like, well, you can't be a bad student, right? If you're going to do a clinical rotation, you have to be a hardworking student. Same thing on the preceptor side, you can't be a bad preceptor. And so we have this feedback system in place, so every time a preceptor works with one of our students, if they don't get a stellar review, then we won't work with that preceptor anymore.

And the whole idea is that every year our students are getting a better and better experience because we're sort of taking the best and the best preceptors.

Anna: Yeah, and that's huge because I'm sure many, many students listening to this podcast can relate, but there are some not so great preceptors out there and people who maybe just aren't necessarily the best fit for you personally.

I know my very first preceptor was, I mean, she had multiple students that she was juggling, but I mean she didn't even know my name for half the clinical rotation. I mean if you don't have that good relationship, that person who really wants to be there teaching you, you're not going to get the very most that you can out of that clinical rotation.

Krish: 100%. And it's actually like, that sort of technology back-end, like that matching algorithm, we started off with some technology back in 2019, 2020, but that's gotten a lot better. And so our idea is like, okay, we don't want our preceptors to burn out, right? Because you burn out and that's what hurts the students because then you don't have anyone. And one preceptor can generally take about six students a year if they're happy.

And so it's about matching the right student and the right preceptor together, right? So if you're a preceptor and you're seeing 35 patients a day, you probably don't want nor need a first semester student. But if you're in a clinic and you're only seeing 8 to 10, you want a first semester student

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because a final semester student might cause you too much stress and pressure. And so it's about matching that in line.

And then we've noticed everyone's a lot happier when they get that match right. It almost sort of clicks and you sort of don't hear anything else about it and it's a beautiful thing.

Anna: Yeah. Can you talk a little bit more about how NPHub does work to match NP students with preceptors? Like what all goes into it? Obviously, like you mentioned, experience, you know, what semester are you in and how busy is the clinic. But how else, what other factors play a role?

Krish: So there's two big things, right? So every one of our preceptors, think of like Airbnb, think of any kind of marketplace that you see, like Rover or something like that, right? You have a profile set up. And so you could sort of self-select because you understand what the profile is and what you're getting into.

And so the first thing we do is our preceptors have a profile. And so the students can go in there and basically get any question they'll ever have about a clinical site from this profile. And so that's how they sort of self-select like, okay, it'll tell you, I prefer a first semester student, or I prefer a bilingual student or bilingual mandatory, something like that, right? And you see that.

And then the second thing we have, and this is really new, we have a university approval score. And so we know, because we've helped a lot of students, we know the rotations that are most likely to get approved by which school. And so at the end of the day, yes, you want a quality preceptor, but even before a quality preceptor, you want your preceptor to be approved.

And so right now, say you go to, I don't know, UCLA, and we have the data that tells us, okay, this preceptor is most likely to be approved by UCLA. If you have multiple options, it sort of helps you tailor.

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Anna: Yeah, that is huge.

Krish: Yeah. And then on the preceptor side, what we do is we have a scoring system as well for the student. So if a preceptor has multiple requests, they'll have a score for each student of a student who's the best fit for them. And so that helps them choose the right student for them. So then, again, they're happy, they don't burn out. And again, our idea is that if you reduce preceptor burnout, you reduce the preceptor shortage.

Anna: Yeah, absolutely. It's all about keeping people satisfied in what they're doing, staying passionate about teaching the next generation of nurse practitioners. Because yeah, when we lose that, then nobody, nobody wins from that situation.

Krish: Yeah, and the people that lose are the patients, right?

Anna: Absolutely.

Krish: And at the end of the day that's sort of the message in our company. Like we get on our company wide meetings every month or so and we're always talking about like, hey, we're here to save healthcare. Every NP that gets into practice, that we help see patients sooner, is more access to healthcare. And I just don't understand why there's less support for NPs in the US. I don't understand it because they're the obvious answer, you know?

Anna: Yeah, they're a huge answer to primary care shortages and patient satisfaction and patient safety. And I think we're really aligned in that, that mental health and that staying passionate and staying not burnt out is so crucial. And that's something that I know we really focus on, you know, supporting nurse practitioners through those mental health, how do you navigate that?

And that's part of the reason why, as you all may have seen in the last couple of weeks, that we've actually launched a partnership with NPHub

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and Blueprint with SMNP reviews. And so do you want to highlight any, you know, what's our main goal with this, Krish?

Krish: Well, if you think about it, every single student that's using SMNP Reviews or will use it, they need clinical rotations, obviously. And then vice versa, every single one of our students needs to pass their boards. And so the idea of the partnership came up with Sarah Michelle at the AANP conference, the last one back in New Orleans was, well, we're both the sort of largest in the space. And we have so many students and they all need help with both these subjects.

And so it just seemed like a natural fit to work together, especially because I think that our brands really – We sort of talk about the same thing, right? We want the same thing, which is just empowering and supporting NPs. They lack resources out in the market.

A lot of these sort of legacy companies, these big old school companies, they don't get it anymore. They don't understand how to speak to just the nurse practitioner, advanced practice market. And so you just see these old school companies not really communicating well, not putting out good material.

And so for us, a lot of students asked us to get into test prep or to be involved with it. And you guys were the obvious, the best in the place, the best in the market.

Anna: Yeah, and again, it's all of that, you can go into your clinicals confidently, you can go in and you can pass your board confidently. And doing those are going to help you transition into practice feeling more supported, being able to advocate for yourself, which is only going to better NP retention, your job satisfaction, but also all of those patients that we are caring for on a daily basis, literally no matter what specialty that you're in.

Krish: 100%. And I think, like if you think about it, our whole idea is, you know, we position ourselves and if you look at our reviews, we're the best

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at what we do. From everything I looked at, you guys are the best at what you guys do.

And then I think the end goal that we don't talk about a lot is that when you're a student and you're kind of utilizing these resources, and you know it's the best in the market, you sort of have much higher self esteem and self confidence in your skill because you can't, you know, that's the biggest thing. It's like, oh, could I have studied more? Could I have gotten better training? Well, if you're using the best in the space, it's not about that question anymore.

Anna: Yeah.

Krish: Because you've got it. And so that's my thought.

Anna: And I can absolutely say from personal experience, walking into that clinical rotation with self confidence, like you're never going to know everything and you need to know that you don't know things. It is absolutely okay to ask questions. But just being confident enough to admit what you don't know, to ask those questions to be there to learn, but also to believe in yourself and the knowledge that you do have, you are going to have a way better clinical experience.

Because walking into my first day of clinicals when I had a very intimidating preceptor, I was not confident. It was night and day different from walking into my last couple of clinicals of like, okay, I can do this, my preceptors are super supportive. I absolutely loved the peds preceptor that I ended up working with. And she was even trying to network to get me a job at the end. It was amazing.

Krish: Amazing.

Anna: So really, it just makes all the difference. But you're right, I mean, you've got to get through your clinicals. That was where I was really stuck. And then you've got to pass your boards.

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Krish: Yeah, I mean, those are the two biggest issues, right? Can I get my clinicals? Can I graduate? And then can I pass the test? Because once you get past that, then you're getting into a new set of problems, right? And so when you've finally made that transition from RN to NP or RN to APRN, and so that sort hurdle really stops when they pass their boards.

Anna: Absolutely. And what from your experience building this company up and seeing so many NPs, like 3000 last year is incredible, being able to be placed to go through clinicals, what are some common mistakes that you see students make when looking at clinical rotations?

Krish: Great question. The first one is at the end of the day, we can begin a debate of whether this is right or not, but the truth is finding a clinical site is very much a sales role. Like it's a sales job, okay? So that has its own issues. But the fact that it's a sales job, one of the things that I notice NPs do is they might get a commitment from a preceptor, say a year in advance. And then the preceptor says, yeah, sure, when it comes I'll sign this. Or I can handle that, no problem. But they don't stay top of mind.

And so the difference or the problem of that one is that everyone's lives get busier, right? People switch jobs. And we know NPs move jobs quite a bit. Another conversation for a different day.

And so what happens is, they get a commitment for a preceptor, they think it's good to go. They won't communicate, they don't want to bother the preceptor for any reason. But then eight months later when the university says, okay, give me your paperwork, they reach out to the preceptor and the preceptor is like, oh, I'm sorry, I can't do it anymore. Or I can't do it, something has changed. And then they're left scrambling.

And in that eight month period, they could have followed up. They could have gotten a soft commitment from that preceptor every few months. Send them a box of flowers, sorry, a box of chocolates or just send a snack or something to their office and be like, hey, looking forward to precepting with you later this year.

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That sort of small interaction goes a long way. And I wish students did that more, it would help a lot.

Anna: It really is like you are putting out a sales pitch to get a clinical rotation. And you can try to cold call as many offices as you want, but that is not the way to get in.

Krish: No. And you hear this all the time, or rather we hear this all the time, all these nurses are like, oh yeah, I took a day off of work, I took two days off work just to cold call clinics. And I'm thinking to myself, like, how crazy is that? The NP shortage is real, the RN shortage is realer. And then we have RNs taking that time off.

I think the second thing is they default to cold calling, or especially over the last few years door knocking. And I think that getting on LinkedIn, you know, there are a lot of these Facebook groups out there where you can kind of say, hey, I need a preceptor. The truth is, most of those places, those preceptors are full or they're mostly students.

Anna: Yeah.

Krish: I think getting on LinkedIn, doing an advanced search for NPs inside your city working at a practice with under 25 employees, is probably the great place to sort of just send a message out, really personable. And that's where I would do my cold outreach.

Anna: Yeah, that's great advice. And let's say you are that student, right? You had something lined up a year in advance, because you were on top of your game and you tried to secure this early, like everyone says. And then it falls through. How quickly can students expect to be matched through NPHub?

Krish: Actually, I can tell you that you will have your paperwork completed in under 10 days.

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Anna: Yeah, that echoes the experience that I had as well. Like it was last minute, the office manager said, nope, we're not taking students right now. And all the NPs, everyone at the office was willing to have me except the office manager, and it fell through. And I was like, well, what do I do?

Krish: Exactly. Yeah. So I would say that in under 10 days you'll have everything done. In fact, most of the time it's actually two or three days, but we want low expectations, exceed expectations, right?

Anna: Yeah. And definitely part of this partnership with you all is we want to give students access to the cheapest resources to really get them successful and self-confident exiting NP school. And I know you all want that as well, as all of the people you have seen are now starting to prepare for boards now that they've finished their clinical rotations. But are there any payment plan options available for students who are interested in using NPHub's service? Because I know that is always one of those points I hear students saying.

Krish: Yes, yeah. Actually, yeah. So I think we were the first to pioneer this and there are payment plans available. So the way it works is just like anything, right? You know, you book a hotel, you book an Airbnb, everyone's used to paying a small deposit. We work the same way. Pay a small deposit, it's all refundable if something doesn't work out.

And then when it comes down to paying that final balance after we've done all our work, you get options, right? Do you want to pay in two installments, three installments? We're actually trying to figure out a way now to get even more installments for our students because, again, what we're seeing is that as the, you know, Covid sort of caused some really crazy times, right?

And so since wages have sort of steadied after Covid we're seeing a lot of our NPs now ask us, hey, is it possible to have a longer payment plan? So we're trying to work on that right now and implement that in place so that our students, you know, eventually one day never have to worry about the

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financial aspect of it. They're just like, oh, okay, consider this like another student loan thing and just knock that out. And that's like the dream.

Anna: It absolutely is the dream. And I know for me personally, it was worth it 100%. One, not having another semester of school. But two, I truly did get matched with a preceptor who was ready to have me, we fit together very well, I learned so much during that rotation. And so I can just say from personal experience that it was 100% worth it.

Are there any like, success stories or like really noticeable or notable experiences that you have from all of this that you want to share as we're wrapping up?

Krish: I think one of the best stories actually happened when we met in New Orleans last year. And so we threw this big sort of like happy hour for our students and preceptors. They didn't really know what to expect from it, because they're like, okay, well, let's see what happens. And so we rented out of the space, you guys at Sarah Michelle, you guys at SMNP Reviews came through and it was exciting. We got a chance to hang out.

What was really cool seeing like some of the people on your team that used us, right? It was you and a couple others as well. And then we had one of our preceptors. And so this preceptor, what was so cool is that she had her partner with her. And her partner, like her business partner, was an NPHub student, rotated with this preceptor, and then she got hired, and then became a partner in the business.

Anna: That's awesome.

Krish: And we've seen a few of those stories throughout, where you go from sort of being a student, someone teaches you up, and then you eventually become sort of a peer and an equal to them. And I think those are the most rewarding stories.

Anna: Absolutely. And it just shows that making that investment in yourself, is just paying off tenfold.

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Krish: Yeah, we actually ran this analysis, sitting out one semester of a clinical rotation costs a student \$26,000, and it's because of the lost income, right? Average RN salary is about 85 grand, maybe a little bit more in some places. Average NP starting salary is usually 120, maybe a little less in some places. And so that difference plus a student loan accrual, because you're basically having loans that you're paying interest on, that sucks.

Anna: Yeah, it does suck. That's the only way you can put it, is it sucks. And way too many students are having to go through that.

Krish: Exactly. And then you're just in a limbo period, right? Like who wants to sort of sit in a, you know, oh, you're supposed to graduate one year, maybe your peers graduated, you didn't, and you're sort of stuck on your own in a silo. It's such a bad place to be, if that makes sense.

Anna: Absolutely. Now I know just from looking at your LinkedIn, looking at some of the other resources available online, you have this thing called NP Jumpstart. So for any of our people who maybe they've passed their boards, are in practice, maybe thinking about starting their own, do you want to talk about this resource and what led you all to create it?

Krish: So it's funny, I actually created it on a whim with a buddy of mine. He had a marketing agency where he worked with dental practices helping them sort of grow and scale their practices. Dental and dermatology, I remember that was like –

Anna: Interesting.

Krish: Exactly. And then, obviously, I work with practitioners. And so what I found out is a lot of NPs want to start don't practice. Full practice authority is a beautiful thing. Every year one big new state adds full practice authority, but that resource of how do you actually build your own practice doesn't exist, right? Not like, hey, how do you get credentialed? And how do you partner up with the health insurance companies?

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No, I'm talking about, how do you actually drive patients to your clinic? Because if you just put your name out there, it's not like people are Googling best NPs, nurse practitioners available near me. Their common vernacular is physicians near me, or best doctors in Atlanta, or best doctors in whatever. And so how do you actually build that practice when you don't have that brand, like that brand of doctor or what people Google?

And so we put together this really easy to consume book, it took a long time. Writing a book is, it's awful. It's awful.

Anna: There are so many layers to it that people don't realize.

Krish: I know. Writing the book was beautiful. Then the editing, oh my God, the editing was painful. I remember. So anyway, we have this 100 page, 105 page book out there. It's on Amazon. And it will teach you the basics on how you go to market for building your clinic. And we've had practices using this that went from making four to five appointments per week up to 20 appointments a day.

Anna: Yeah.

Krish: And so that was like one amazing success story. But the lessons in here, our rule of thumb when we wrote the book, it's got to be easy, it's got to be low cost because the last thing you have when you start your own practice is flush pockets. It's like I have time and you have the sweat work ethic right there, right? You've got to sweat it out. And so how do you do that? And that's what we wrote the book about.

Anna: Yeah, and being a business owner yourself, creating these companies and doing all these things, do you have any sort of business advice or like one pearl that you would give an NP trying to start their own clinic?

Krish: I think this is worth saying, especially if you're sort of like an early career NP. Just by virtue of having your degree, you're an authority in the space. And I think a lot of times people overthink their marketing. You

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know, your NPs think like, I don't want to get on TikTok and do those dances. It's like don't, you're an authority in the space. I think educational-based marketing is a beautiful thing that works really well.

And so like, you have asymmetric information, right? The NP is sort of the knowledgeable person in the room and then the patient obviously doesn't know anything, right? And so when you're marketing, you're marketing to the patients, and they don't know anything and you do. And so I think trying to teach your patient is like when you record content on social media, when you write a blog post, when you are whatever on TikTok or doing a reel or whatever, it's about like, what can I teach my patient? Because remember, like, they don't know anything and you guys do. And I think that's like the biggest piece of advice.

Anna: Yeah, absolutely. And speaking of social media and blogs, I know as we're wrapping up here, almost out of time, but you all have a variety of blog articles on your NPHub website that I've perused through. They're great for NP students and students trying to find clinical rotations.

So are there any specific topics that you remember that you want to highlight for people to go look out for?

Krish: Yeah, I think if you go to our website and you type in how to find a preceptor on my own or how to find a preceptor using social media, we have a lot of free resources. The whole idea of this is we want to be the resource of NPs who need to find clinical sites, whether you use us or you don't. If you can use our articles and find one on your own, high five. But if you can't, if something happens or you run out of time, or you'd rather just have our quality control in place, then come to us.

So we have a lot of those like scripts on like, what do you exactly copy and paste and send to a preceptor on LinkedIn to get an answer?

Anna: Yeah.

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Krish: Again, it's just what we do. It's what we do now. Literally, I've taken the scripts from our sales team and said, here you go, this is what we say. This is what you guys should say too.

Anna: So for all of those students who are listening in, you are looking at securing your clinical rotations, maybe something has fallen through or you're an NP looking to start in your own practice, definitely look into our partnership that we just launched with NPHub. Definitely go search those for preceptors on LinkedIn, do all the things.

Reach out to us if you have any questions, that is what we are here for. That is what Krish and his team are here for. We are absolutely here to support you all in every single step of this journey. And it will pay off. I want to remind you all that this part is tough, but it will absolutely pay off. And with this degree you have endless opportunities. So just keep that in mind, you are so close to the finish line.

As an extra bonus friends, if you're looking for support no matter what phase of your nurse practitioner journey that you're currently in, I have communities available for both students and new nurse practitioners. In these communities, we work to uplift one another and grow this profession together every single day. Links to join will be included for you in the show notes.

Thanks for listening to *Real Deal Nurse Practitioner Club*. If you want more information about the different types of support that we offer to students and new nurse practitioners, you can visit npreviews.com. We'll see you next week.