

# Ep #167: The Future of Nurse Practitioners: AI, Autonomy, & What's Next



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Anna Miller**

## Ep #167: The Future of Nurse Practitioners: AI, Autonomy, & What's Next

Anna: Welcome to the *Real Deal Nurse Practitioner Club*, the podcast for nurses who are ready to pass their boards and thrive in their careers as real deal nurse practitioners. I'm Anna, and I'm the Director of Nursing Content at Blueprint Test Prep. Whether you're deep in exam prep or stepping into practice, I've got you. It is time to become the confident, knowledgeable NP that you're meant to be. Let's dive in.

Hey, hey there. Welcome back to the *Real Deal Nurse Practitioner Club* podcast. I'm your host, Anna, and of course, I've got Alex with me here again today.

Alex: Hi everyone. I am so excited to be here with you today.

Anna: I am really excited for this episode, too. So many of you right now, we're in peak testing season. You've graduated, you're entering practice. And so I wanted to take a quick break from our content, even though we love content. But I wanted to talk about something that's both really exciting and honestly really important as you're becoming an NP. And that's really the future of the profession. Right, we know medicine is always evolving. And the way we practice now already looks different than it did 10 or 20 years ago. And that pace is only increasing.

And I'm going to be honest, we cannot predict everything. If only, I would go buy a lottery ticket. But what I want to do is just look at what's happening right now, look at our recent trends, and get a really good sense of where things are headed.

Alex: Yeah, so today, we're walking through some of the biggest trends shaping NP practice and what that actually means for you.

Anna: Yeah, I want to start with one of the biggest shifts we're continuing to see, which is a really positive one and one we definitely need to be advocating for. And that's increasing autonomy for nurse practitioners. More and more states, thankfully, are moving toward full practice authority, which means NPs can evaluate, diagnose, treat, and prescribe

## **Ep #167: The Future of Nurse Practitioners: AI, Autonomy, & What's Next**

independently without physician oversight. And this isn't just a professional win; it's a patient care win too, right? Especially with provider shortages in primary care and rural areas.

Alex: Yeah, and what's really important to realize here, especially if you're still in school, is the NP role isn't static. It's expanding, and it will always be expanding. So even if you start in a state without full practice authority, there's a strong chance things will continue to shift over your career.

Anna: Yeah, and it's one of those things that you want to be involved with your nursing organizations and help advocate for. I know I personally am in Tennessee, which is not quite there yet, but I'm hoping to see that come to Tennessee eventually.

Now, another huge trend, and probably not a surprising one, is telehealth, right? COVID really accelerated its adoption. But what's interesting is that even as COVID restrictions lightened up, it didn't go away. Patients really like it. Systems have invested in it, and now it's a really permanent part of healthcare delivery. I know I personally love my telehealth visits. And this means that you're not just learning how to care for patients in an exam room, but you also need to learn how to assess and manage patients remotely if that's something you're interested in, and it's very different.

Alex: Yeah, and it's evolving beyond just video visits. So we're also starting to see more integration with remote monitoring and real-time data. So patients at home might be tracking their blood pressure, their blood glucose, or even their cardiac rhythms, and that data feeds directly to the provider. So this really shifts us towards more continuous care, really, than those episodic visits maybe once or twice a year.

Anna: Yeah, and it's great because it makes care more accessible for people who might not be able to just go see somebody or go drive to a clinic, especially if they're in a rural area that's kind of far away from somewhere.

## **Ep #167: The Future of Nurse Practitioners: AI, Autonomy, & What's Next**

All right, now I do want to talk about one that is literally evolving every single day. And it's definitely something everyone is curious about and also something people are probably pretty unsure about in healthcare. And that's going to be AI, specifically AI in healthcare.

Really, the key thing to understand is this: AI is not here to replace us as clinicians, but it is here to support us. Right? We are seeing tools that help with clinical decision-making. Of course, please, please still use your brain. It's also helping with risk prediction, diagnostic support, and a big one, the one that I probably love the most, is workflow efficiency, especially documentation.

Alex: Yes, documentation is a huge area where you'll see this. So as you all probably know or have experienced, charting takes up a huge amount of time. There are already tools being developed that can generate notes during patient visits in real time. So that's a major shift. When I started nurse practitioner school, I still had some paper charts. This process and with AI integration, it gives you critical time back.

Anna: Yeah, I'm seeing that more and more. For example, my husband just went to the doctor recently, just to his primary care, and they, of course you need patient consent, so they asked him, "Hey, we have an AI transcriber. Do you mind if we use it?" and it transcribed the whole note right in front of him.

Now, AI is also improving how we interpret imaging and labs and population-level trends. So it's helping us see patterns we might not otherwise catch. And the shift here isn't that you need to become a tech expert, but it is that you need to be comfortable using these tools and really understand how they support, not how they replace, but how they support your clinical decision-making.

Now, one other trend that's really starting to grow, and you'll probably hear a little bit more about this over time, is what's called personalized medicine. Right? We're really moving toward a model where treatment decisions are

## **Ep #167: The Future of Nurse Practitioners: AI, Autonomy, & What's Next**

more tailored to the individual patient instead of a one-size-fits-all approach. And that's something that I know we have learned time and time again as nurses, but might not be in the entire healthcare space yet.

Alex: Yes, and you'll see this happening in the major clinical practice guidelines. You know, for example, the new cholesterol guidelines are really based on individualized care and the individualized clinical picture. But a really exciting part of this is something that involves pharmacogenomics. And so that basically uses a patient's genetic information to guide medication choices.

So this allows the clinician to make more targeted decisions about what medications are likely to work and which ones will cause the least amount of side effects. Now, a common area you'll see this in is mental health. So, for example, helping guide antidepressant selection. This can make treatment much more efficient and reduce that trial-and-error period for patients.

Anna: Yeah, all the new things coming out and the new technology coming out with pharmacogenomics is so interesting. I actually remember, I mean this was a long, long time ago, but I remember getting my labs drawn for just like my yearly labs, and there was an option. They were trialing this and just trying to get data. And so they asked for consent, right, to try my blood, and I got all of these cool results back of like the genes and what medications work and what won't work and why. And so all of the research coming out, I mean it's even more impressive now than it was 10, 15 years ago, but...

All right, this one doesn't always get a lot of attention, but I do want to mention it, and we've talked about it on the podcast before is global health, right? Healthcare is becoming more interconnected. Between things like globalization and shifting disease patterns, what happens in one part of the world can really impact another. And NPs are increasingly playing a role in addressing those challenges.

## **Ep #167: The Future of Nurse Practitioners: AI, Autonomy, & What's Next**

Alex: Yes, and keep in mind, this isn't just a US-based role anymore. So NP or NP-like roles exist in many countries now, which, with a little bit of paperwork, opens the door to international work, policy development, and public health initiatives.

Anna: Yeah, and you might be thinking like, "Okay, that is not for me," but this can really show up in everyday practice too, right? Like whether that's recognizing emerging infectious diseases, understanding travel-related risks, or just managing diverse patient populations. This is definitely something you just want to have a grasp on for your clinical practice.

All right, I want to also talk about education. One, because I love it, but two, because that's always evolving as well. And there's ongoing discussion about the DNP becoming the standard entry-level degree. But we don't know, right? We don't know what's going to happen there. It's kind of like the undergraduate, you know, associates versus bachelor's debate. But ultimately, our bigger picture here is clear, and that's that expectations for training should be increasing.

Alex: Yeah, and that makes sense when you look at just how complex healthcare is becoming, right? You're not just learning clinical care; you're navigating technology, data interpretation, and population health, like we just discussed.

Anna: Yeah, and a little shout out to Alex going back to get her DNP right now.

Alex: Yes, it's going to take me 100 years, but I am getting there.

Anna: All right, let's talk about one more, and it's one of the, like, I think, really exciting trends. And that's NP entrepreneurship, right? We're seeing more nurse practitioners stepping into roles where they're not just providers, but they're business owners and they're innovators. And that can look like opening your own clinic or a telehealth practice or, like Sarah Michelle did, creating educational platforms.

## **Ep #167: The Future of Nurse Practitioners: AI, Autonomy, & What's Next**

Alex: Yes, and this ties directly back to autonomy. So as your scope expands, so do your opportunities to build something of your own. And for a lot of NPs, this is where you really get to design a career that actually fits your goals and not just follow a traditional path. And honestly, this is one of the most exciting parts of the profession right now because there are truly endless opportunities.

Anna: Yeah, and I know when you're like, you're in it right now, you're in the thick of it, you're studying, you can just like barely focus on graduating and passing boards and like getting your first job. It can feel really overwhelming. But give yourself some grace. Remember, it takes that like six months to a year to really start feeling like you have your feet under you. But remember, there are truly endless opportunities, like Alex said, and if you find yourself not satisfied, it doesn't mean you're not meant to be an NP. But maybe you just need something a little bit different.

And really, when we zoom out, what's our big picture here? Ultimately, we're seeing more autonomy, more technology, more flexibility, and more opportunity. But with that also comes more responsibility and a need to stay adaptable.

Alex: Exactly. Remember, this is not a stagnant career. It's evolving, and it will always be evolving, and you're stepping into it at a really important time.

Anna: Yeah, and if you're listening to this while studying for boards or maybe you're just in your NP program still, remember, you are not only preparing to pass an exam, right? You're preparing to enter a profession that's actively shaping the future of healthcare.

Alex: Yeah, and in my personal opinion, that is a very exciting place to be.

Anna: Absolutely. All right, that's going to wrap up today's episode. Thank you, everyone, for tuning in. As always, we are rooting for you. You can do

## **Ep #167: The Future of Nurse Practitioners: AI, Autonomy, & What's Next**

this. We will see you next time. Next week, I'm doing another lab mini-episode over INR.

And then, of course, if you need more resources, check out our free Facebook study group for primary care. You can follow us on Instagram @SMNPREviewsOfficial. And we have all sorts of fun little mini-videos and mini content like this on our YouTube channel.

Thanks for listening to another episode of the *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](https://npreviews.com). We'll see you next week.