

Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist



The logo is a green, scalloped-edged seal. Inside the seal, there is a white circle with a blue border. The text 'PEDIATRIC NURSING' is at the top, 'PMHS' is in the center in large blue letters, and 'PEDIATRIC PRIMARY CARE MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST' is written in smaller blue letters below it. At the bottom of the seal, it says 'CERTIFICATION BOARD'.

Primary care is often the first place where developmental, behavioral, or mental health conditions surface. Access to specialized care can have long wait times. The Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist (PMHS) helps ensure that kids get validated help faster for conditions typically seen in primary care like ADHD, anxiety, depression, and more.



Clinical expertise of developmental, behavioral, and mental health (DBMH) conditions in children



Holistic health mindset and approach to optimize child well-being



Therapeutic communication skills for children and their families

Keywords

- Relationship-builder
- Culturally responsive
- Patient and good listener
- Agile provider who can pivot if a surprise concern arises
- Individualized care over time
- Out-of-the-box thinker

Career Steps

1

Graduate from an accredited university program with a degree as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner in primary care, Family Nurse Practitioner, Psych-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, or Child/Adolescent Psychiatric & Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist.

2

Earn the appropriate certification for your education and role, then acquire your advanced practice nurse state license.

3

Enter practice to gain on-the-job experience and develop skills related to PMHS care. Learn about [exam eligibility](#) to start your journey to PMHS.

4

Use the [PMHS exam content outline](#) to identify topics seen in pediatric primary care. Begin counting pediatric DBMH clinical hours to meet exam criteria.

5

Achieve 2,000 hours for Pathway 1 or 1,000 hours for Pathways 2 and 3. Screening and assessment, collaboration, and referrals count toward the hours.

6

Complete remaining exam requirements related to knowledge development such as CE/CME, specialized learning opportunities, or faculty experience.



Links for further reading

- Pediatric Nursing Certification Board: The PMHS Role: <https://pncb.org/pmhs-role>
- Why become a PMHS? <https://pncb.org/pmhs-success-stories>
- Hallas D, Heuer B, Sesay-Tuffour S, Foerster A. Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist Examination: Job Task Analysis. The Journal for Nurse Practitioners. 2023 Feb 19(2). [https://www.npjjournal.org/article/S1555-4155\(22\)00318-X/fulltext](https://www.npjjournal.org/article/S1555-4155(22)00318-X/fulltext). Accessed October 20, 2023.
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners TeamPeds Talk. Feb 16, 2023. The Future of Child Mental Health. Season 7, Episode 1. <https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/teampeds-talks/episodes/S7-E1-The-Future-of-Child-Mental-Health-e1ujnd4>. Accessed October 20, 2023.



IPN

INSTITUTE of PEDIATRIC NURSING

Supporting the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board's vision for a healthier world one child at a time

PNCB

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Earn pediatric nurse certification at [pncb.org](https://www.pncb.org)