

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
Advanced Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Program Report
October 1, 2025

[Pursuant to W.S. 21-17-116 (e) and (f)]
To the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Interim Committee

Program Overview

The Fay W. Whitney School of Nursing (SON) offers a graduate program that prepares Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (PMHNP). PMHNPs are advanced practice registered nurses who provide a full range of psychiatric care, including assessing, diagnosing, and managing the prevention and treatment of psychiatric disorders and mental health problems. PMHNPs work in various settings, from outpatient settings such as clinics to hospitals. The demand for PMHNP is high across the state since every county in Wyoming is underserved for mental health.

A master's program, started in the fall of 2005, began with funding assistance from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Student enrollment began in the 2005-2006 academic year. In 2010, the University's Board of Trustees approved the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program to replace the master's degree nurse practitioner program. The move to the DNP was part of a larger national movement in nursing shifting advanced practice registered nursing (APRN) education to the doctoral level. In fall 2005, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing voted to change the level of preparation necessary for advanced practice nursing, including education for nurse practitioners, from the current master's degree to the doctorate level (DNP) by the year 2015. The move to the DNP was in response to several key national studies highlighting problems with the quality of health care in the US, the increasing scope of advanced practice nursing, the explosion of information and biomedical technology, pressures to improve quality of care while reducing costs, an aging and increasingly diverse population, and worsening disparities in care with larger barriers to access. The DNP program allows the UW School of Nursing to continue the successful pipeline of primary care and mental health providers into practice in Wyoming, with students being able to choose to complete the DNP requirements for national certification as either a family nurse practitioner (FNP) or a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner.

The SON has three full-time faculty who are doctorally educated and nationally certified as PMHNP. This allows the SON to fully-implement the PMHNP option in the DNP program with the first four graduates of the DNP program specializing in psychiatric mental health nursing in the Summer of 2017. There were four graduates in the spring of 2025..

Required Reports

W.S. 21-17-116 (e) – Under this provision, like the WWAMI program, the University's Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of the President of the University, may relieve a student from repayment of a loan provided under this section for undue hardship. The provision requires the University to report to the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Interim Committee the number of students who have been relieved of the obligation to repay the loan.

W.S. 21-17-116 (f) – Under this provision, again similar to the WWAMI program, all loan repayments are to be credited to an account to be used by the University to fund loans under this program. This provision requires the University to report to the Committee regarding expenditures from this account during the preceding fiscal year.

Loan Repayment Update

A total of 34 students have been supported by the PMHNP loan payment program since it was established. The table below summarizes the status of those participants who currently owe on their loan as of July 1, 2025. It should be noted that there is no residency requirement for students to participate in the loan repayment program, although preference is given to Wyoming residents. Two participants are repaying the loan (Repayment). Of those not listed on the table, the UW Board of Trustees canceled one loan due to hardship for a former student and the remaining participants have paid their loan either in professional practice or through monetary payment.

Status July 1, 2025	Hometown	Practice Town
Repayment	Ann Arbor, MI	
Repayment	Highlands, UT	

FY24 – Fiscal report

Advanced Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Program	
Collections (principle & interest)	\$ 0.00
<i>Loans canceled for practice in Wyoming – FY24</i>	<i>\$ 0.00</i>