MEMORANDUM

To: USD Nurse Practitioner Preceptors
From: USD Nurse Practitioner Program Faculty
Subject: Doctoral Program Nurse Practitioner Scholarly Practice
        Master's Program Nurse Practitioner Clinical Preceptorship

Clinical experience with expert clinical preceptors in a variety of primary care settings is an essential educational component for a Nurse Practitioner (NP) student. This component of the curriculum involves a minimum of 12 semester units of clinical practice during the 46-52 unit Master’s program or the scholarly practice phase of the 78-81 unit Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. Students in the DNP program complete an additional 8 semester units of clinical practice during the DNP scholarly practice. This clinical practice is divided into several courses throughout the program with the most concentrated clinical focus occurring in the latter portion of the program. The courses that are required before the student moves into the clinical component include pharmacology, pathophysiology, and physical assessment and diagnosis. These courses are taught by the School of Nursing faculty at the University of San Diego. Students in the DNP program complete additional coursework such as methods of translational science, philosophy of reflective practice, and epidemiology-biostatistics, prior to beginning their scholarly practice.

NP students are licensed to practice nursing in California and are covered annually by the University’s Licensed Professional Liability insurance coverage. These students are currently pursuing a graduate degree in nursing with a focus on primary health care delivery. USD NP students have the responsibility to identify their clinical experience strengths and areas of expertise, as well as any limitations they may have, in a conference with their clinical preceptor(s) prior to beginning the scholarly practice experience or preceptorship. It is recommended that the preceptor meet with the student prior to the start of the semester or early in the clinical rotation so that the student’s learning objectives and past clinical experiences can be shared. The USD NP students do not receive compensation for clinical care provided during their clinical learning experiences. Likewise, there are no funds available to reimburse clinical preceptors for their time spent mentoring students.

Clinical preceptors are academically and clinically qualified NPs and physicians who supervise client encounters so that students can successfully fulfill the clinical learning objectives for the course focused on a specific patient population (e.g., pediatrics,
women’s health, adults, or geriatrics). Depending on the clinical course requirements, preceptors must be willing to spend four to twenty-one hours a week in a clinical teaching and supervisory capacity with a NP student in a primary care setting.

At the beginning of the clinical component of the program, the NP student is learning to take health histories, perform complete and focused physical examinations and develop differential diagnoses. In the first several semesters, students learn diagnosis and management skills with common acute and chronic health problems. Near the completion of the program, NP students encounter clients with more complex, acute and chronic conditions, and develop skills in interdisciplinary collaboration and referral to ensure safe, comprehensive, quality care. The graduate nursing student brings to the clinical setting a broad background in counseling, client education, growth and development, and the competencies of an experienced registered nurse. Initially, these activities are carried out collaboratively with the clinical preceptor and written standardized procedures may be available or be developed to facilitate this process. As the student progressively integrates and strengthens their knowledge and skills, the supervision needs to be modified to promote clinical learning and role development while assuring competence and safety. Students enrolled in the DNP scholarly practice will need to collaborate with their preceptor to identify a DNP project that can be completed during the third year of the DNP program.

The USD School of Nursing guidelines for clinical preceptors are attached. The NP Clinical Placement Coordinator will usually make the initial contact to ascertain the clinician’s willingness to serve as a NP student preceptor for the upcoming semester. Once a clinician has verbally agreed to precept a USD NP student, the clinician is requested to provide the NP Clinical Placement Coordinator with a copy of their current curriculum vitae or complete a Biographical Data Sheet, if one is not already on file in the USD School of Nursing. Then, a formal letter of agreement is prepared and signed by both parties and the preceptor is provided with a copy of the appropriate clinical course syllabus. The course objectives, as well as the student’s individual learning objectives, will provide a framework to focus the student’s learning experiences. After being notified by the NP Clinical Placement Coordinator that arrangements for their placement have been made, each student will contact their designated preceptor to share their individual clinical learning objectives for the semester and to mutually schedule the days and times each week for their clinical experiences. This process should be accomplished before the semester and the clinical experience begins.

A NP clinical site facilitator faculty member responsible for supervising the student's overall clinical experience will make a site visit during the semester. Preceptors are
encouraged to communicate with the faculty at any time if there are concerns regarding the students' progress toward meeting their learning objectives and/or the preceptor wants additional clarification pertaining to the scope of their role and associated responsibilities.

Please direct any questions or concerns to:

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