



Joyce Pulcini PhD, RN, PNP-BC, FAAN, FAANP began her nurse practitioner career as a pediatric nurse practitioner in a school based clinic in Boston through the Cambridge/Harvard system. She was recruited to teach part time at Northeastern University in Boston and has combined teaching with practice throughout her career. While teaching at Hunter College in New York City, she became active in health policy which was the focus of her doctoral study. At George Washington University, she was director of Community and Global Initiatives which opened many avenues for her. She is active in the Nurse Practitioner/Advanced Practice Nurse Network (NPAPNN) of the International Council of Nurses (ICN). She was a founding member of the Nurse Practitioner Associates for Continuing Education (NPACE). Dr. Pulcini was on the Board of Directors for the National Organizations for Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) and received the Lifetime Achievement Award. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and the American Association of Nurse Practitioners.

#### Interview Abstract:

Dr. Pulcini has worn many hats throughout her career. She attributes her depth and breadth of her professional career to geographically relocating several times, each time finding a new interest or opportunity. Health policy and international NP education have significantly influenced her career. One of the highlights of her efforts was seeing full practice authority for nurse practitioners in Massachusetts in 2021. She has taken students to Haiti, Nicaragua and Ecuador through her work at Boston College and George Washington University. She also conducted a survey that examined NP programs globally with international colleagues through the NPAPNN. She also contributed to the Guidance Paper prepared for the International Council of Nurses that articulated the roles of the NP and CNS in 2020. Dr. Pulcini was very active in the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, serving on the Board of Directors. She believes that an ongoing challenge is trying to keep NP curriculum appropriate, current and maintain integrity of advanced nursing practice. Competencies rather than clinical hours are more meaningful. She also supports residencies for new NPs. In addition to her teaching in NP programs, she also practiced as a pediatric nurse practitioner. She believes that nurse practitioners should seek out and embrace new opportunities.

#### Biographical Sketch:

Dr. Joyce Pulcini is an expert on the evolving roles of nurse practitioners throughout the world, focusing on nurse practitioner education, reimbursement, political advocacy and removal of barriers to practice. Over the course of more than 40 years as a pediatric nurse practitioner, educator and author, she has become a leader in health care and nursing policy at local, state and

national levels and is known for her work in the global development of advanced practice nursing.

She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (AAN) and served as the inaugural chair of the AAN Expert Panel on Primary Care. She is also a Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) and was the Distinguished Practitioner at the National Academies of Practice. She is also a former Primary Care Policy Fellow in Nursing. She received the Lifetime Achievement Award from NONPF. Dr. Pulcini serves as senior associate editor for the journal, *Policy, Politics and Nursing Practice* and authored over 70 peer-reviewed articles, chapters and policy papers. She has contributed to two editions of a textbook on Pediatric Primary Care. She co-authored *Advanced Nursing Leadership: a Global Perspective*, in 2020.

She has supported the nursing profession through her service on numerous advisory boards and panels, including the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Technical Expert Panel and the nursing research advisory committees of the National Association of School Nursing and Children's National Medical Center.

Key words: pediatrics, international education, health policy, education

Joyce Pulcini

Interview

AANP oral history project

## **Interview: Joyce Pulcini PhD, RN, PNP-BC, FAAN, FAANP**

**Date:** 6/15/21

**Interviewers Name:** Michaelene Jansen

**Place for Interview:** Telephone



### **Education:**

1964-1968	B.S.	Nursing. St. Anselm College, Manchester, NH
1972-1973	M.S.	Maternal Health. Nursing. Boston University, Boston, MA
1973-1974	Certificate	Pediatric Nurse Practitioner. Nurse Practitioner Program. Northeastern U, Boston, MA
1982-1987	PhD	Social Policy: Focus: Health Care & Developmental Disabilities. Florence Heller School Brandeis University Waltham, MA

### **Certifications;**

#### **Short Bio:**

Dr. Joyce Pulcini is an expert on the evolving roles of nurse practitioners throughout the world, focusing on nurse practitioner education, reimbursement, political advocacy and removal of barriers to practice. Over the course of more than 40 years as a pediatric nurse practitioner, educator and author, she has become a leader in health care and nursing policy at local, state and national levels and is known for her work in the global development of advanced practice nursing and survey research she and an international team conducted on education, practice and regulation of advanced practice.

She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (AAN) and served as the inaugural chair of the AAN Expert Panel on Primary Care. She is also a Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) and was the Distinguished Practitioner at the National Academies of Practice. She is also a former Primary Care Policy Fellow in Nursing. She received the Lifetime Achievement Award from NONPF. Dr. Pulcini serves as senior associate editor for the journal, *Policy, Politics and Nursing Practice* and authored over 70 peer-reviewed articles, chapters and policy papers. She has contributed to two editions of a textbook on Pediatric Primary Care. She co-authored *Advanced Nursing Leadership: a Global Perspective*, in 2020.

She has supported the nursing profession through her service on numerous advisory boards and panels, including the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Technical Expert Panel and the nursing research advisory committees of the National Association of School Nursing and Children's National Medical Center.

**When did you become an NP? What was the motivation?**

After working for a year in a hospital after becoming a registered nurse, I worked as a public health nurse in Washington DC. I covered 4 elementary schools over four years. Although I enjoyed the experience, I wanted to do more. I received my masters in Maternal Child Nursing at Boston University in 1973. I then worked in Cambridge at school based clinics with Dr. Phillip Porter and received my PNP certification from Northeastern University. My first PNP job was through the City of Cambridge/Harvard system and I absolutely loved it. We provided primary care through school based clinics, were school nurses and did newborn home visits. At that time the scope of advanced practice was quite narrow. We had pre-signed scripts and protocols. It was a good way to start.

**What experiences did you bring into the role?**

Since I had my master's degree, the Director of the Northeastern University asked me to teach part time and gradually I became the director for this second oldest NP program, which originated as the Bunker Hill-Massachusetts General Program. I ended up closing the program in 1983 secondary to funding and changes in nursing education. I obtained my PhD at Brandeis University and then taught at Boston University. I directed the graduate programs until John Sliver, President at BU suddenly closed the nursing programs in 1988. There were over 100 PhD students enrolled at BU at the time. It was very difficult to close the nursing programs at BU but I stayed and helped to transition the NP program at BU to a master's program at Northeastern University in Boston in 1989. After a year or so, my husband was transferred to New York. Initially I was Director of Training for Nursing, Westchester Institute for Human Development, Valhalla, NY and became active in health policy which was the focus of my doctoral studies. I also taught briefly at Columbia University but then went to Hunter College of the City University of NY and developed and taught in the PNP program there. Hunter is a great school and very diverse. In 2000, we moved back to Boston and I taught in the graduate nursing programs at Boston College, directing the PNP program. Throughout my academic career, I always maintained clinical practice as a PNP. In 2012, Dr. Jean Johnson recruited me to become the Director of Community and Global initiatives at George Washington University in Washington DC which opened new horizons for me.

**Did you experience any challenges? How were they resolved?**

I believe an ongoing challenge is trying to keep NP curriculum appropriate, current and maintain integrity of advanced nursing practice. Competencies rather than clinical hours are more meaningful. I support residencies as new NPs need to transition into their roles. Otherwise bad habits or burn out could develop.

**Are there any experiences that you would like to talk about?**

I think that moving around geographically throughout my career helped me to know a lot of people. I was very involved in the NP organization in Boston which helped expand my professional networks. Through the Nurse Practitioner/Advanced Practice Nurse Network (NPAPNN) of the International Council of Nurses (ICN), I connected with so many people internationally. I have taken students to Haiti, Nicaragua and Ecuador through my work at BC and GWU. I conducted a survey that examined NP programs globally with international colleagues through the NPAPNN. I also contributed to the Guidance Paper prepared for the International Council of Nurses that articulated the roles of the NP and CNS in 2020.

**What was most challenging in your career/ most important?**

Probably the most touching and personal experience was receiving the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) Lifetime Achievement Award. That meant so much to me professionally,

Another important milestone for me was the promoting and obtaining full practice authority for NPs in Massachusetts in January 2021.

**Is there anything you would want to change?**

No, I don't think so. Perhaps I could have done more research but my interests focus more on practice, education and health care policy. I have had a great career and feel very fortunate. I think I was ahead of the curve in terms of my own education which opened many doors for me. For example, I obtained a BSN when most nursing programs were diploma based. I then got my masters four years later and my PhD in 1987.

**What do you see as pivotal moments in the past years?**

My twenty-year involvement in Nurse Practitioner Associates for Continuing Education (NPACE) was very empowering. That group was the first NP continuing education business. I was fortunate to be one of the founders and although it was hard work, the founders were all leaders in NP practice from various states. We still get together on a regular basis. NPACE was a pacesetter and planned its own conferences. AANP started during a Washington, DC NPACE meeting in 1984.

My doctoral program was interdisciplinary and focused on health policy. My international experience also opened everything for me including international contacts, expanded world view, broader teaching perspectives.

**What advice would you give to new nurse practitioners?**

Take every opportunity that comes your way. It's all about choices. We took risks and it paid off. We were fortunate not to be constrained financially; financial assistance was readily available for education. Unfortunately, NPs today worry about the bottom line; there is minimal funding or financial assistance available for students. The pandemic also placed financial hardship on NPs and students. Therefore, it is harder to take risks today. There is a very different world view now.

**What do you see as the role of Nurse Practitioners in the next 25 years?**

Nurse practitioners need to keep going and move the role forward. Students and NPs need to be socialized into nursing. Full practice authority will help legitimize the role. Nurse practitioners will be at the forefront globally. Currently, in other countries, nurses are poorly paid and have low social status and as a result the brightest individuals tend to go into medicine. The rise of nurse practitioners internationally will help improve their status and value globally.