

My name is [REDACTED]. I am a proud mother of 15-year-old twins (boy/girl). I was born in Lima, Peru, and moved to San Diego, California, at 14.

I joined the Healthcare field 20 years ago and had the opportunity to work in various roles, including field nursing, management, regulatory, clinical risk, quality improvement, quality assurance, and business operations.

Nursing has provided me with numerous opportunities, but my passion always leads me to improve the quality of life of our patients by focusing on achieving our Organization's Quality Improvement, Quality Assurance, and Patient Experience goals.

I am fortunate to have been allowed to lead our Quality department in the Director of Quality role. In my current position, my responsibilities include ensuring our organization maintains the Joint Commission accreditation improving quality metrics and overall patient experience. My journey through healthcare has shown me how drastic changes have resulted in not enough providers of mental health care to meet the demands of the growing population. This change has led me to pursue a master's degree in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing (PMHNP). I understand that the pandemic has only made this shortage of mental health providers more acute. I aspire to use my degree to make a positive difference in my community and to help people who are struggling with mental health issues.

It was published in 2019 by the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) entitled 'Shortage of Trained Professionals Threatening the American Mental Health System', concluding that the shortage of mental health providers is increasing. It was estimated that 56 million adults in the United States had mental illness or substance abuse disorders, though there is an increasing shortage of skilled and dedicated caretakers (APNA, 2019). "Of the 67 million adults and children in the U.S. who need mental health and substance use services, 44 percent receive them (APNA, 2019, p.1)." Approximately 250,000 healthcare providers are expected to be in short supply by the year 2025, according to U.S. Department of Health and Human Service (HHS, 2019). A shortage of providers can result in an increase in violence from non-compliance with medications and an increase in suicide rates from lack of treatment. There were 56 million Americans living with a mental illness or substance use disorder in 2019, and the number of providers specializing in these conditions is declining (APNA, 2019). "The U.S. is facing a shortage of providers of mental health and substance use care, as only 44 percent of adults and 20 percent of children and adolescents receive treatment for these conditions (APNA, 2019, p.1). This lack of access to mental health services has resulted in significant health disparities, with individuals living in rural and low-income areas having the least access. Mental health services are essential for people to thrive, and this current shortage is having a devastating impact on individuals and communities across the country. Therefore, I feel that I will be able to provide treatment to those in need as an APRN who combines holistic nursing approaches with medical diagnoses and treatments (Kinchin, 2019). I am committed to using my knowledge and skills to