The average Purdue Global military student is awarded 54% of the credits needed for an associate's and 45% of the credits needed for a bachelor's. Most Commonly Searched: Most Commonly Searched: Nurse practitioners are experiencing higher-than-average job growth and are one of the fastest-growing occupations in the nation. In the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ most recent report on the 20 fastest-growing occupations in the nation, nurse practitioner comes in at a tie for number one. Employment of nurse practitioners is projected to grow 38% from 2022 to 2032, much faster than the average for all occupations. We sat down with Purdue Global’s Michele McMahon, DNP, associate dean in the School of Nursing, to learn about the factors influencing the nurse practitioner job outlook. An advanced practice registered nurse is a registered nurse who has earned at least a Master of Science in Nursing. The opportunities for practice are wide-ranging and can include becoming certified and licensed as an advanced practice nurse practitioner. “Nurse practitioners can choose to work autonomously in various specialties, including family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, and women's health. They can also work in in-patient acute care settings, including the emergency department, urgent care, and geriatrics,” McMahon says. Regardless of setting, NPs have a range of clinical skills that include diagnosing and managing acute and chronic conditions, ordering and interpreting laboratory and imaging studies, prescribing medication, and educating and making appropriate referrals for patients and families. Four main factors behind the high demand for nurse practitioners are: One hundred two million Americans live in areas without adequate numbers of primary care providers, according to the Health Resources and Services Administration. The U.S. faces a projected shortage of between 37,800 and 124,000 physicians by 2034, according to a report released by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). Specific AAMC projections by 2034 include shortages of: “There is a shortage of primary care providers in the U.S.,” McMahon says. “And there is a limited number of physicians in rural areas as well. Because APRNs provide many of the same services as physicians, nurse practitioners are essential to bridging the gap and improving access to care in our communities.” Nurse practitioners with full practice authority (this varies by state) have a positive impact on health outcomes and health care utilization. Nurse practitioners increase access to care, thereby increasing the incidence of routine well-visits and decreasing the need for urgent and emergency care services for conditions that may be treated and managed in the clinic. “The AMA reports that there will be physician shortages for years to come. It may take up to 10 years for a physician to train and practice at their full capacity; the use of nurse practitioners can assist in providing care in both primary care and acute care settings to offset the effects of the physician shortages,” says McMahon.