

## **April Croston, Family Nurse Practitioner, Joins Northern Urgent Care**

**April Croston, FNP-C**, has joined the clinical team of **Northern Urgent Care**, a division of Northern Regional Hospital. As a Family Nurse Practitioner, the 34-year-old healthcare provider diagnoses and treats patients for a variety of non-emergency conditions that are most appropriately treated in an urgent-care setting.

“I’m excited to be part of Northern Urgent Care because it’s meeting a great need for the health of the community,” says Croston, who was raised and currently lives in Mount Airy. For the past four months, Croston and her colleagues have been meeting that need by treating a steady flow of patients. “We deal with just about everything – from cuts to colds to COVID testing,” she says. “We do basic suturing, blood draws, X-rays and imaging studies, and provide referrals to specialists, as needed.” As a certified Department of Transportation (DOT) Medical Examiner, Croston is also able to perform physical examinations for licensed truck drivers who require an annual DOT medical certification.

“Our availability to see patients, including walk-in patients, every day of the week is beneficial to those who can’t get an immediate appointment with their own primary-care doctor or who may need help on the weekend,” explains Croston. When speaking of the clinic’s convenient access for patients and its operational efficiency, Croston gives a special nod to Kitty Tate, on-site director of Northern Urgent Care. “Kitty runs it like a well-oiled machine,” says Croston. “She is open to suggestions, and very receptive to ideas from the staff to improve patient care and efficiency.”

Croston’s desire to become a nurse was influenced early on by her mother – who, before becoming a social worker, worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant. “As a young child, I was always around nurses and nursing facilities,” she recalls. “One day, when my Mom and I pulled into a KFC, we saw a man collapse. My mother jumped out of the car, ran to his aid, and took charge – telling someone to call 911 and then staying with the man until the EMS crew arrived.” That early experience of her mother’s heroic action helped fuel her future decision to pursue a career in nursing.

Before starting her nursing education and training, Croston was committed to a nonstop track to achieve her ultimate professional goal as a Family Nurse Practitioner. What she hadn’t counted on, though, was a brief interruption in those plans. Following her graduation in 2010 from Mountain State University, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree, she took a brief exit off the educational path to fall in love, get married, and have a baby

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daughter. “I got sidetracked and took a few years off!” she laughs. She then confidently resumed her advanced studies – and, in 2015, earned her coveted Masters of Science in Nursing degree from the Family Nurse Practitioner program of Walden University.

For the past 15 years, Croston has provided care and comfort in a number of different clinical settings – including women’s health centers, hospital medical/surgical floors, and urgent care facilities. One single constant, however, has been her approach to patient care. “I treat all my patients the way I want my family to be treated,” she says. “I listen to their concerns, and offer the best evidence-based treatment recommendations that I can provide.”

As a knowledgeable healthcare professional, Croston encourages her patients and all community residents to make arrangements to get the COVID vaccination. “I recommend getting the vaccine; but I also believe it needs to be a personal decision between a patient and their primary-care provider,” she says.

When not attending to patients, Croston and her family – including husband Tim, their 10-year-old daughter Emma; and two dogs (a 14-year old German Shepherd and a newly adopted puppy) – enjoy camping and other outdoor activities. The attentive mother also enjoys reading – as either a solitary pastime or as quality time spent with her daughter.

The Crostons also delight in opening their home to foreign exchange students. Before COVID, they hosted a high-school senior from Germany; and they now look forward to entertaining additional exchange students once the travel and associated health restrictions of COVID are over. “It’s a very rewarding experience for the student and hosts,” says Croston. “Our student was great; and she and my daughter became very close and still talk.”

**Northern Urgent Care** is open seven days a week and conveniently located at 119 Welch Road, Suite A in Mount Airy, NC (at the corner of Highway 52 and Snowhill Drive). Hours of operation are 8 AM to 7 PM Mondays thru Friday; 8 AM to 5 PM on Saturday, and 11 AM to 5 PM on Sunday. Phone: 336-719-7200.

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