

September 30, 2013

The Honorable Eric Shinseki
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
801 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) Workgroup, we write to commend the efforts of the Veterans Administration (VA) to ensure America's Veterans receive timely access to quality healthcare through the proposed revisions to the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Nursing Handbook 1180.03. Specifically, we applaud the modification to recognize APRNs as Licensed Independent Practitioners (LIPs) in all VHA facilities. This action is consistent with the Institute of Medicine in *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, which recommends APRNs should practice to the full extent of their education and training to help promote patient access to high-quality, cost-effective healthcare.

The APRN Workgroup is comprised of organizations representing nurse practitioners (NPs) who deliver primary, specialized, and community healthcare; certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) who provide the full range of anesthesia services as well as chronic pain management; certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) who are experts in primary care, maternal, and women's health; and clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) offering acute, chronic, specialty, and community healthcare services. Totalling more than 200,000 healthcare professionals, our primary interests are patient wellness and quality outcomes. Decades of compelling evidence shows the role APRNs play in increasing access to care, decreasing cost, and strengthening care coordination. By changing the Nursing Handbook to include APRNs as LIPs, the VHA will have the ability to maximize the full range of evidence-based healthcare services that APRNs provide. Our nation's Veterans deserve an optimal healthcare delivery system that offers seamless and timely care, and this change helps accomplish that goal.

On behalf of our organizations and our dedicated members, we appreciate your serious consideration of using APRNs to their full scope of practice, as it will improve access to care for Veterans. We urge you to remain steadfast in this recommendation. The VA is an innovator in efficient and effective healthcare delivery, and this action would swing the pendulum forward and set a historic precedent for quality care. Thank you for your consideration of this request. If we can answer any questions, please contact Frank Purcell of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, 202-741-9080, fpurcell@aanadc.com.

Sincerely,

American Association of Colleges of Nursing, AACN

American Academy of Nursing, AAN

American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, AANA

American Association of Nurse Practitioners, AANP

American College of Nurse Midwives, ACNM

American Nurses Association, ANA

Association of Veterans Affairs Nurse Anesthetists, AVANA

National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists, NACNS

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, NAPNAP

National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health, NWP