October 6, 2015

Representative Jeff Miller
Chairman
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
336 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Corrine Brown
Ranking Member
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
2111 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Brown:

On behalf of the more than 340,000 Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) members of our organizations, including roughly 6,000 APRNs serving in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), we are writing today to express our agreement with recommendation 6.4.2.1 "Formalize Full Nursing Practice Authority throughout VA" included in the VA Independent Assessment, *A Product of the CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare Federally Funded Research and Development Center Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Assessment B (Health Care Capabilities)*, which was prepared for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs by the RAND Corporation. We support recommendation 6.4.2.1 as it urges the VA to expand Veterans access to quality healthcare by authorizing all VHA APRNs Full Practice Authority. We ask you to support VHA publishing the necessary proposed rule authorizing Full Practice Authority for all VHA APRNs.

Within the section on increasing productivity within existing resources, in Assessment B (Health Care Capabilities), the report urges the VHA to, "formally grant Full Practice Authority for all advanced practice nurses (APNs) (nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, nurse anesthetists, and nurse midwives) across VA…." By moving forward with this long-considered recommendation, now further validated by the VA Independent Assessment ordered by Congress, we will provide our nation's Veterans with timely access to critical healthcare services provided by APRNs in the VHA. APRNs include 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. By recognizing NPs, CRNAs, CNSs, and CNMs to their Full Practice Authority, the VHA will make optimal use of these critical members of the healthcare workforce across the entire care continuum. Many of the APRNs practicing in the VHA are also Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, providing them with a unique clinical perspective.

Our Veterans must not be forced any longer to wait for these critical services that they deserve and have earned. Granting all VHA APRNs Full Practice Authority will help alleviate the physician shortage in the VA and also increase the productivity of the VA's workforce while also reducing costs. Our nation's Veteran's deserve optimal healthcare and the VA should take every step to address the immediate and long-term efficacy of the VHA. Recommendation 6.4.2.1 and APRN Full Practice Authority proposals currently under review in the VHA are consistent with previous recommendations of the Institute of Medicine, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing *APRN Consensus Model* and supported by decades of evidence. The VHA's recognition of all APRN's Full Practice Authority would make VHA healthcare delivery consistent across the country and also with models already practiced by our U.S. Armed Forces, Indian Health Service and Public Health Service systems. Our Veterans using their Veterans Access Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-146) benefits already have benefited from APRNs serving to their Full Practice Authority.

We are eager to work with you to implement this critical recommendation promptly and effectively in the interest of America's Veterans whom our members serve. If you have any questions, please contact Frank Purcell, American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Senior Director Federal Government Affairs, at fpurcell@aanadc.com, 202-741-9080.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Nursing (AAN)

American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)

American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA)

American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)

American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM)

American Nurses Association (ANA)

National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS)

National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP)

National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF)