December 16, 2015

Nancy M. Schlichting, Chairperson

Commission on Care

1575 I Street, NW Suite 240

Washington DC, 20005

Dear Ms. Schlichting:

On behalf of the more than 340,000 Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) members of our organizations, including more than 6,000 serving in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facilities, we are pleased to share with you more than 100 letters from leading Veterans and members of Veteran Service Organizations across the country who support recognizing APRNs to their Full Practice Authority in U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare facilities.

Our organizations represent 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; as well as APRN students and the faculty who educate them.

Thousands of APRNs serve Veterans nationwide by providing access to high quality healthcare across the entire care continuum. Recognizing all APRNs to their Full Practice Authority is consistent with healthcare delivery models already practiced in the U.S. Armed Forces, Indian Health Service and many private facilities where Veterans already obtain healthcare authorized by the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act. This policy also follows recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine) and would help the VA maximize its existing healthcare workforce in a cost efficient manner. The literature clearly demonstrates the safety of APRN services in every setting, for every patient type, and as part of each Veteran’s healthcare team.

The recommendations from the VHAs own Independent Assessment and the Institute of Medicine’s 2010 report on the future of nursing are consistent with modernizing the VHA Nursing Handbook to allow APRNs to practice to their Full Practice Authority. This action helps ensure America’s Veterans have access to the high-quality healthcare they need and deserve. We are continuing work to educate Veterans and Veterans organizations about the benefits of the Nursing Handbook revisions, and are pleased that they have responded positively.

We thank you for your leadership in this critical effort and look forward to continuing to work with you to finalize and implement full APRN practice authority ensuring our Veterans full access to high quality healthcare. The APRN community stands ready to assist the VA in its efforts to provide our Veterans the highest quality care they have earned and deserve. 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 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

Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association, GAPNA

National Association for Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, NAPNAP

National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists, NACNS

National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health, NPWH

National League for Nursing, NLN

National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, NONPF

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