

June 23, 2016

The Honorable Sam Graves
1415 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky
2367 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Graves and Schakowsky:

The undersigned organizations, dedicated to the well-being of our nation's service men and women and our Veterans, are writing to express support for a Dear Colleague letter that you are circulating for signature by members of the House of Representatives. This letter supports the efforts of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to finalize and implement a proposed rule that would improve Veterans direct access to high quality care through greater recognition of the scope of education and skills of all Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) serving in the VHA.

Published in the *Federal Register* on May 25, the proposal would implement evidence-based recommendations from the VHA's congressionally mandated independent assessment of the Health Care Delivery Systems and Management Processes of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and aligns with recommendations from the Institute of Medicine and current APRN policy in U.S. military services, Combat Support Hospitals and Forward Surgical Teams.

America's Veterans have dedicated their careers to protecting our nation, and they deserve improved access to high quality, safe, and efficient care. Recognizing the education and clinical preparation of APRNs at the VA is a common sense step toward ensuring our Veterans can access the care they have earned.

APRNs are highly skilled practitioners with expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of illnesses and the delivery of evidence-based nursing interventions. APRNs include Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs) and Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs). Acknowledging the scope of their education and skills will enable APRNs to provide more comprehensive care, giving the VHA greater flexibility to utilize all providers within the healthcare team, maximize existing resources, and, in turn, improve access to high quality care. Decades of research has shown that APRNs provide safe care in all settings and with all patient populations. This proposal will allow VHA to utilize its nearly 6,000 APRNs in the most efficient manner possible to meet the growing health care needs of our Veterans.

We commend your commitment to improving access to exceptional services within the VHA, and urge you to join your colleagues in support of this important proposal.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Nursing (AAN)
American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA)
American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM)
American Nurses Association (ANA)
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association (GAPNA)
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS)
American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP)
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF)
National League for Nursing (NLN)