



## Michigan Chapter National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

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February 14, 2012

Dear Senate Health Policy Committee:

The Michigan Chapter of the National Association of Pediatric Advanced Practice Nurse Practitioner's supports the Senate Bill 481. We encourage you to pass this bill, which gives definition of the Nurse Practitioner (NP) within the Public Health Code. Nurse Practitioners have been practicing for over 40 years. In many inpatient and outpatient settings, the quality and safety of Nurse Practitioners care has been well researched and well documented. Fully integrating the contribution and skills of primary care practitioners of all educational backgrounds and, specifically, the contributions of Nurse Practitioners is a vital policy step towards achieving high-value health care. Many times Nurse Practitioners are filling a critical need for health care services where otherwise there would be no health care. In these areas, Nurse Practitioners provide independent care by virtue of their scope of practice, education, training and certification.

The specifics of NP practice recognized nationally are not reflected in Michigan's Public Health code. Michigan Residents will be better served by having regulatory language that accurately describes the current education, certification, and licensure of the NP roles. The impact to society for not recognizing NPs is felt both financially and with decreased access to health care. "Under utilization of nurse practitioners has been estimated to cost society \$9 billion annually" (AACN). Mandatory direction and supervision happens due to the lack of definition in the public health code, and unduly intrudes upon the professional judgment and recognized expertise of NPs.

Multiple barriers to effective NP practice exist in Michigan. These barriers translate into patient care barriers and result in a decreased access to health care in Michigan. Some of these barriers include: the inability to order physical therapy or speech therapy or occupational therapy or even infant formula (which is found on every grocery store shelf). These barriers exist because the Public Health Code does not clearly define the role of the NP.

Successful reform must enlist NPs as skilled health providers, advisors, caregivers, dispensers of medicine, and interpreters of instructions, care coordinators, expert thinkers, planners, advocates, and catalysts for change. The full engagement of the nursing profession is needed for real health care change.

Nurse Practitioners must be recognized as providers of health care to realize a decrease in health care costs, an increase in access to health care and continued quality in the delivery of health care. The simple step of updating the Michigan Public Health Code will help Michigan move toward a healthier state. All providers must be able to practice to their fullest capacity and education preparation. There is no place for limitations or regulations that are not based in evidence. One of the hallmarks of our

profession is the acceptance of responsibility and consequence for all services provided. NPs are accountable to the public, to the patient and to the nursing profession for their scope of practice. Safety, access and quality of care are compromised when patients and their families are confused as to whom is responsible for their care when the family assumes the "delegating" physician has full knowledge of all that has been ordered. This lack of transparency is impeding health care. Delays in an order being completed as the prescription for care is sent back for a "physician's signature", impedes care. Prescriptions for medications sometimes not filled resulting in negative outcome due to the complexities of prescription authority in Michigan. The status quo has created a system fraught with potential vicarious liability, reimbursement liability issues, physician time to re-sign orders and prescriptions as well as to document oversight of the NPs. This has created a health care system with a built in increased cost of delivering health care.

Primary care providers are at a premium today and access to care for many Michigan residents who are poor, non-white, uninsured or under-insured or have special needs is almost nonexistent. Nurse practitioners are filling this critical need for health care services. Fully integrating the contribution and skills of all primary care practitioners and specifically NPs, is a vital step toward achieving high value health care. Laws that prohibit provider discrimination should be enforced so that patients and families have access to the primary care provider of their choice.

The quality and safety of nurse practitioners care has been well researched and well documented. It is time to move away from this debate in order to create a health care system that accepts and embraces all providers of health care. MINAPNAP supports Senate Bill 481 and request that you support it as well. Please vote Yes for SB 481.

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[http://WWW.nursetown.com/nurse\\_jobs\\_article\\_39.html](http://WWW.nursetown.com/nurse_jobs_article_39.html).