



Written testimony for the Health Policy Committee of the
Michigan Senate

Submitted by Debra Nault, RN, MS, Michigan Nurses Association

**Re: HB 4156 (Retired nurses practicing as volunteers)
June 13, 2013**

Chairman Marleau and members of the committee:

Thank you for allowing me to give my professional opinion on this important reform.

My name is Debra Nault.

I have been a registered nurse for more than three decades.

I have a master's degree in nursing and I'm also a certified nurse midwife, which is a type of advanced practice registered nurse.

And, by the way, it's very important that the APRN licensure bill get passed, but that is for another time.

In addition to practicing as a nurse for decades, I have taught nursing students at my alma mater, Michigan State University.

I'm currently the Nursing Practice Director at the Michigan Nurses Association, where I monitor the latest research and evidence-based practice in the nursing field and oversee continuing education.

From all of these perspectives, I strongly support this legislation.

It simply makes sense to make it possible for retired nurses to volunteer at free and low-cost medical clinics.

At MNA, we are working toward a day when every American, regardless of income or status, has guaranteed health care.

In the meantime, free and low-cost medical clinics fill a critical gap.

And nurses, being nurses, want to help.

We know firsthand that there are far too many people in our state who simply do not have affordable access to health care.

This has heartbreaking consequences that are painfully preventable.

Over my years as a nurse and midwife, I have seen countless teens and pregnant women whose health was affected – sometimes very severely – by lack of preventative and prenatal care.

Every nurse can tell you about a sentinel event (which is a very unexpected negative outcome, such as an infant death) that could have been averted, if only a patient had not waited for care to go the emergency room ... or had had the money to pay for preventative screening.

If retired nurses are allowed to volunteer at these clinics, more residents will receive care and more medical problems will be prevented.

Registered nurses are highly skilled, highly trained professionals who can greatly enhance the quality and timeliness of the care provided by these clinics.

Advanced nurse practitioners are highly educated and experienced professionals who can assist in filling the gap of the predicted primary care provider shortage.

Nurses are some of the hardest-working people you'll ever meet, and believe me, that doesn't stop in retirement.

We're natural problem solvers.

As we advocate in the long-term for a health care system that serves everyone, we want to help solve this problem in the short-term.

We just need you, our legislators, to take care of this technicality so we can lend our expertise and time.

Thank you.