

ARNP Signature Authority

HB 129

This bill increases access to health care and decreases costs by recognizing the signature of a nurse practitioner where the signature of a physician is required.

The Issue:

Nurse Practitioners provide primary care for millions of Floridians. In many areas the only health care provider available is a nurse practitioner. Patients are being denied needed services and forced to spend money unnecessarily on office visits, autopsies and additional services because NPs cannot sign certain paperwork. Patients also have been resuscitated because paperwork could not be signed in a timely manner. Families have also been affected because of paperwork problems. They have had to spend money on unnecessary autopsies and have had funerals delayed simply because a nurse practitioner could not sign paperwork.

Examples:

Guardian ad Litem : Physical exam clearance not accepted without physician signature

Jury Duty: permanent disability letter not accepted without physician signature

Death Certificate: Physician signature only delays funeral arrangements and even may require an autopsy if physician out of country or never saw the patient.

Do Not Resuscitate Orders: physician only signature delays care, requires visit by second health professional if patient is care for by ARNP, patients have been resuscitated because paperwork was not signed due to delays.

Baker Act: physician only signature has lead to patients committing suicide.

Statements of Incapacity: Need to be able to verify a patient is unable to make their own decisions. This is usually because of dementia.

Certificates of Terminal Illness: Need to be able to sign so that an order of Do Not Hospitalize may be written for terminally ill patients who wish to die at home or in facility.

The Solution:

HB 129 removes outdated legislative barriers to nurse practitioner care. It increased access to care by allowing all qualified providers to practice to the top of their license. Increasing access to care reduces wait times and decreases costs to the health care system.