



**NURSE PRACTITIONER
Association of Maryland**

The mission of the Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland (NPAM) is to ensure a sound policy and regulatory foundation that enables nurse practitioners to provide accessible, high quality healthcare to the public

July 15, 2016

Secretary Robert A. McDonald
US Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420-0001

Dear Secretary McDonald,

On behalf of the Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland (NPAM), which is the only association in Maryland which advocates solely for nurse practitioners and represents over 725 members, and as practicing nurse practitioners, we are writing to express support for the proposed rule [RIN: 2900-AP44 - Proposed Rule - Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (81 Fed. Reg. 33155, May 25, 2016)] which addresses the growing demand for health care services within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) by allowing our nation's veterans to have direct access to high quality health care delivered by Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), including nurse practitioners (NPs).

As you know, over 6,000 APRNs, of which over 4,000 are NPs, currently provide a full range of services to our veterans in the VHA. The safety of APRN services has long been recognized by the VHA and underscored by peer-reviewed scientific studies. These studies have proven consistently that the care provided by APRNs, practicing to the full scope of their education and preparation, is equal to the care of their physician counterparts. This large and ever growing body of evidence has led the National Academy of Medicine (formerly the Institute of Medicine), AARP, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the National Governors Association, and the Federal Trade Commission to encourage providing patients direct access to APRNs.

Limiting APRN practice within the VHA impairs access to care, risks lengthening delays in health care delivery, increases healthcare costs, and fails to promote patient safety. That is why I urge you to move forward with this proposed rule. By finalizing and implementing this rule, we will be ensuring that our veterans receive timely, high quality health care.

Swift enactment of this policy update will provide veterans with direct access to the safe, high quality, patient-centered care that NPs have provided for more than 50 years. Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter.

Regards,

Veronica Gutchell, DNP, CRNP, President, NPAM

Beverly Lang, MScN, CRNP, Executive Director, NPAM

The Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland, Inc.
P.O. Box 540, Ellicott City, MD 21041
Toll Free: 888-405-6726 Fax: 410-772-7915
www.npamonline.org NPAM@npedu.com