

Nurse Practitioners Care for PA

Nurse Practitioners Care for the Patients Who Need Health Care the Most

“Relative to primary care physicians, APRNs are more likely to practice in underserved areas and care for large numbers of minority patients, Medicaid beneficiaries, and uninsured patients.” – Federal Trade Commission, Mar. 2014.ⁱ

Nurse practitioners (NPs) are more likely to care for the people who need health care the most. Senate Bill 25 would use full practice authority to allow NPs to expand access to care for these patients.

- In states with licensure laws that more closely match the national standard of full practice authority, NPs see more Medicare patients.ⁱⁱ
- Nationally over two-thirds of NPs provide care to Medicaid patients, and nearly three-quarters accept Medicare.
- Health care policy experts – including the Institute of Medicine, the AARP, the National Governors Association, the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, and more – overwhelmingly recommend full practice authority as a way to expand access to care for underserved populations.
- Kaiser Family Foundation: “Wider deployment of NPs and PAs is a promising strategy for increasing the supply of primary care providers in Medicaid, in areas underserved by physicians, as well as system-wide.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The current system is two-tiered: those who have access to primary care, and those who don't.

- Some who oppose full practice authority cite the vague threat of a two-tiered system. Not only has that concern been disproven definitively in 22 states that already grant full practice authority to NPs, it ignores the most important fact: **the status quo is a two-tiered system.**
- Researchers compared states that have full practice authority to those that don't. They found that Medicare and Medicaid patients experience **50% more unnecessary hospitalizations** in states like Pennsylvania without full practice authority compared to states that have it.^{iv}

Medicaid and low-income patients wait longer to get appointments – when they can get an appointment at all.

- A 2014 University of Pennsylvania study found 2 in 3 primary care physicians in Pennsylvania are turning away new Medicaid patients. 82% turn away prospective patients who were uninsured.^v

It's no secret why: low reimbursement rates mean physicians are choosing not to see new Medicaid patients.

- Pennsylvania Medical Society: “Because many providers opt not to participate in Medicaid due to its low reimbursement rates, it is expected that patients with Medicaid would experience more difficulty in getting a primary care appointment.”^{vi}

There is one health care system. The most important thing for everyone is regular access to primary care. Full practice authority allows NPs to expand access to care for patients who need health care the most.

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- ⁱ Federal Trade Commission, "Competition and the Regulation of Advanced Practice Nurses," March 2014.
- ⁱⁱ Health Affairs, "States With The Least Restrictive Regulations Experienced The Largest Increase In Patients Seen By Nurse Practitioners," 2013.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Improving Access to Adult Primary Care in Medicaid: Exploring the Potential Role of Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants," March 2011.
- ^{iv} Nursing Outlook, "Impact of nurse practitioners on health outcomes of Medicare and Medicaid patients," July 2014.
- ^v JAMA Internal Medicine, "Primary Care Access for New Patients on the Eve of Health Care Reform," June 2014.
- ^{vi} PA Medical Society Press Release, "Primary Care Available to Most Patients Despite Concerns that ACA Coverage Would Overwhelm Physician Supply," April 2014.