

## **Nurse Practitioners Rally for Full Practice Authority**

Pennsylvania Legislative Services

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A group of nurse practitioners held a press conference Tuesday in the Main Rotunda to rally for SB 25 and HB 100, which would permit full practice authority for qualifying nurse practitioners. Speakers focused on how the change would improve health care access for Pennsylvania residents.

Adele Caruso, president of the Pennsylvania Coalition of Nurse Practitioners, referenced the large amount of practitioners in attendance to say they love their work and are here for one reason; to serve patients. She stated the finish line is in sight and legislative efforts are coming to fruition for full practice authority, referencing new studies and policies which recommend empowering nurse practitioners as she said they are largely educated to provide primary care. "The time is now," Caruso emphasized, labeling the initiative as the answer to a health care shortage in Pennsylvania. She closed adding that Pennsylvania must keep pace with the movement by passing modern laws for nurse practitioners and if the state falls behind, patients fall behind.

Sen. Lisa Boscola (D-Northampton) discussed previous State Senator Patricia Vance who she said worked hard along with her to get something done for nurse practitioners and commended Sen. Camera Bartolotta (R-Washington) for her work. She mentioned she is proud to support expanding nurse practitioner's roles and SB 25 was previously voted out of the Senate, elaborating the bill would allow nurse practitioners to operate independently after meeting requirements such as three years and 3,600 hours practice with a physician. Sen. Boscola noted that would be one of the strongest requirements in the nation and implored the House to take up the bill or move HB 100. She pinned the real issue as affordable and accessible health care, adding the bill would protect patients with requirements for training and preparedness while also addressing challenges in areas that have limited access to primary care physicians. Closing Sen. Boscola noted in her own experience her nurse practitioner is seen more than her doctor which should be available for everyone and again implored the House to take up the measure as 21 states and Washington DC already have.

Rep. Jesse Topper (R-Bedford) agreed with a "team approach to medicine," drawing on his coaching experience to say this legislation puts nurse practitioners in a position to succeed and ultimately puts constituents in a position to succeed. He maintained the status quo is not his goal and this is "simply the right solution" for quality, affordable, and accessible health care in the state.

Rep. Thomas Murt (R-Montgomery) also voiced support for the initiative mentioning his wife has a Ph.D. in nursing and was a neo-natal intensive care nurse. He said 58 million Americans live in areas with primary care shortages and Pennsylvania must meet that need by expanding the use of nurse practitioners. He also opined the bill would alleviate pressure on the "over-burdened primary care system" with a projected 30 percent increase in primary care from nurse practitioners if the bill is passed. Rep. Murt specifically outlined HB 100, saying it would allow them to provide health care free of administrative burdens and expand primary health care to all areas. He reiterated 21 states and Washington DC have already passed similar legislation and voiced support for the cause.

Joanne Grossi, state president of AARP Pennsylvania, advocated for full scope of authority for nurse practitioners saying it would improve consumer access and choice of health care providers and better access to high quality care. She highlighted how nurse practitioners already have the training and skills necessary to provide the care, and called for Pennsylvania to be the next state to allow this measure. On AARP, Grossi explained her organization is fighting for that end especially for older people who need care at home and want to stay out of costly nursing homes, especially in rural areas. She added the most common concerns "have not materialized" in other states and the status quo is failing too many people, urging passage of HB 100.

Rep. Pamela DeLissio (D-Montgomery) was also in attendance.