

Nurse practitioners rally at Capitol

ABC27 Harrisburg

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4/17/18

<http://www.abc27.com/news/local/nurse-practitioners-rally-at-state-capitol/1127810458>

HARRISBURG, Pa. (WHTM) - Dr. Lorraine Bock is nurse practitioner working in Harrisburg. She says there are too many Pennsylvanians, especially in inner cities and rural communities, who don't have easy access to health care.

"There are not enough physicians practicing primary care in the commonwealth," Bock said, "and patients have to travel 60, 70, 80, sometimes over 100 miles in order to get just basic, primary care."

A bill would allow nurse practitioners to provide primary and specialized care to patients in underserved communities by giving them full practice authority.

Joanne Grossi of AARP Pennsylvania says the bill would benefit older Pennsylvanians.

"We think it's very important at AARP that all of our 1.8 million members have this kind of access to quality, primary health care," Grossi said.

Currently, in order to practice, a nurse practitioner has to enter a collaborative agreement with two physicians. Supporters of House Bill 100 say this offers no patient health benefits.

However, the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association supports the current approach, saying in a statement, "The physician-led medical model ensures that professionals with complete medical education and training are adequately involved in patient care."

Twenty-one other states and Washington, D.C. have passed similar legislation. Supporters hope Pennsylvania is next. A companion legislation, Senate Bill 25, passed the state Senate last year.