

Pennsylvania becomes strictest state with new reform as Senate Bill 25 passes

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Hundreds of nurse practitioners (NPs) from across Pennsylvania traveled to Harrisburg on Tuesday and rallied on the steps of the Capitol rotunda to advocate for better access to care for residents and show their support for Senate Bill 25 and House Bill 100.

An hour later, the Senate Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure Committee passed Senate Bill 25 by a margin of 13-to-2.

The bills would enable NPs to provide primary and specialized care patients across Pennsylvania, especially those living in rural and underserved communities, by modernizing the state's licensure rules. SB25 and HB100 have bipartisan support from legislators and numerous statewide and national organizations, including AARP Pennsylvania, the Hospital and Health system Association of Pa., and more.

A full list of supporting organizations is here.

“On behalf of patients across Pennsylvania, we thank lawmakers for taking the first step toward modern health care laws. Full practice authority for nurse practitioners means three things for patients: higher health care quality, increased access, and lower costs,” said Lorraine Bock, President of the Pa. Coalition of Nurse Practitioners (PCNP).

“Nurse practitioners and physicians will always work together, just as they do in the 22 states that have already enacted this reform. This is about fixing the paperwork requirements so that patients can benefit.”

Dr. Edward Podczaski, M.D. is a gynecologic oncologist with Pinnacle Health Women's Cancer Center.

“As a physician, I see the many ways that patients benefit from regular access to quality care. Unfortunately, I also see what happens when they don't have regular health care,” Dr. Podczaski said. “Twenty-two states already allow nurse practitioners full practice authority. Nearly 35% of Pennsylvanians live in an area with inadequate access to primary care. There are not enough physicians in practice in smaller communities and certified nurse practitioners may provide a solution to this need.”

Lieutenant Commander Dennis MacDougall, USN, Ret. became a nurse practitioner in the United States Navy. He currently works as an emergency room NP in York County.

“Several years ago I ran the largest emergency department in the entire Department of Defense system and the busiest emergency room in the Virginia Beach area. We served over 500 thousand veterans. I retired after 27 years of service, and now I want to take what I learned, start a business, and serve patients here, especially fellow veterans” Lt. Cmdr. MacDougall said.

“But state law meant that I couldn’t just come to York and continue what I had been doing for 27 years in the Navy. Our laws should work with veterans, patients, entrepreneurs and care providers to serve our communities.”

Under the legislation, every nurse practitioner would be required to:

- Have a bachelor’s degree
 - Have a master’s degree or doctorate
 - Earn national certification
 - Comply with the ongoing guidance and oversight of the State Board of Nursing
 - Complete 3,600 hours and three years under the existing collaborative agreement mandate before being eligible for full practice authority
- o Note: the 3,600 hour/three year requirement would make Pennsylvania the strictest state in the country to enact this reform.