It's about putting Pennsylvania's patients first. Patients looking to see a healthcare provider are often told that a doctor isn't taking new patients, or that they have to wait weeks for an appointment. There simply aren't enough doctors. With 8,000 nurse practitioners (NPs) in Pennsylvania, we can increase access to care.

It's about strengthening team-based practice. Getting rid of burdensome mandates doesn’t mean getting rid of a culture. In fact, it does the opposite. Team-based practice – that is, putting the patient at the center – is at the core of NPs' philosophy.

It's about patient outcomes, not hours in a classroom. Nurse practitioners have a Master's Degree, and some have doctorates. All dedicate the whole of their careers and education to improving patient care. Dozens of studies have shown NPs' patient outcomes to be the same or better compared to those of physicians.

It's about comforting and caring for patients in hospital settings. Allowing PA hospitals to grant medical staff privileges to NPs is good for patients. Having their primary care provider with them during a hospital stay puts patients at ease and helps them recover.

It's about putting our money where our mouth is. NPs work hard to keep patients well and manage or prevent more costly chronic diseases. That's why insurers like Highmark, UPMC Health Plan, Independence Blue Cross, and Geisenger are starting to reimburse NPs directly.

It's about aligning our laws with our colleges and universities. 23 outstanding colleges and universities in Pennsylvania graduate NPs who are fully prepared to take care of patients. Why, then, does state law still require burdensome, outdated oversight for our NPs?

It's about aligning our laws with reality. What is a nurse practitioner under a mandated agreement supposed to do if the collaborating doctor retires, moves out of state, or ends a contract? It disrupts patient care and puts the NP's practice at risk.

It's about making Pennsylvania competitive and workforce-ready. Health care companies looking to relocate rely on NPs being able to practice to their full ability. The FTC says lifting collaborative mandates is “pro-competitive,” and with 550,000 potential new patients under the Affordable Care Act, NPs can help attract business and meet patient demand for primary care.

It's about Pennsylvania not being left behind. The Institute of Medicine, National Governors Association, AARP, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Affordable Care Act, and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid, not to mention 17 states and the District of Columbia, support doing away with mandated collaborative agreements. Pennsylvania needs to get with the times.

It's about empowering a group of independent professionals – especially women. Over 95% of NPs are women who want and deserve the right to practice, start a business, make decisions, and earn an income that matches their education, certification, and experience. And they deserve to do it without mandated oversight.