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NEWS RELEASE



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ANA DEFENDS THE HIGH STANDARD OF CARE ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSES PROVIDE IN RETAIL BASED CLINICS

Silver Spring, MD — The American Nurses Association (ANA) reaffirms its long-standing support for advanced practice nurses to serve as independent providers of health care services, particularly in retail clinics. Recently, the American Medical Association' called for investigations of 'potential conflicts of interest posed by joint ventures between store-based health clinics and pharmacy chains' as it relates to 'patients' welfare and risk'. ANA believes nurse practitioners are a critical component to the health care delivery system and opposes any action that creates barriers to their practice or denigrates the standard of care they provide.

The AMA resolution states that their concern over retail based clinics hinges on the belief that those clinics serve to drive more business into the stores in which they are housed. ANA's *Code of Ethics for Nurses* states that the nurse's first priority is to preserve and protect the patient's right to make an informed judgment regarding health care. To that end, nurse practitioners have an obligation to provide a patient with accurate, complete and understandable information which allows that patient to determine the desired method of treatment. A nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, and ANA objects to any suggestion that nurse practitioners would put the goals of their employer above the goal of providing quality health services.

The AMA suggests that the standard of care could be compromised in a store-based health clinic; however numerous studies have shown that advanced practiced registered nurses (APRNs) including nurse practitioners, provide high quality health care services. A study published in the

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Jan. 5, 2000 *Journal of the American Medical Association* compared the outcomes of patients randomly assigned to medical doctors (MDs) and nurse practitioners within the same managed care organization and found that “patient’s outcomes were comparable”.

In its *Health Care Agenda*, ANA calls for more community based and preventative care. Retail clinics serve in that capacity by meeting the health care needs of the population. In the May/June 2005 issue of *The American Nurse* which examined retail clinics, approximately 50 percent of clinic patients did not have primary care providers. Working parents often are unable to pursue urgent care until after work or school hours. This necessitates seeking health care during evening and weekend hours which too few primary care physicians provide. Nurse practitioners in retail clinics provide convenient and cost effective health care to an increasing number of Americans who would otherwise delay seeking care. Medical professionals would better serve their patients by improving and expanding their health care access and working as colleagues with nurse practitioners and other independent health care professionals.

The American Nurses Association is dedicated to fostering the highest professional standards for registered nurses. ANA remains committed to the principle that all persons are entitled to ready access to affordable, quality health services. ANA will pursue legislative and regulatory action that protects the rights of APRNs, including nurse practitioners, to practice fully within their scope of practice, in retail clinics or other health care services.

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The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 2.9 million registered nurses through its 54 constituent member nurses associations. The ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.