

**Written Statement for the Record
American Nurses Association
“Examining Legislative Proposals to Reform Medicare Provider Payment
and Bolster Health Care Cybersecurity”
U.S. House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee**

September 15, 2026

The American Nurses Association (ANA) appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement for the record regarding the House Energy & Commerce Health Subcommittee Hearing, “Examining Legislative Proposals to Reform Medicare Provider Payment and Bolster Health Care Cybersecurity”. ANA thanks the Subcommittee for including **H.R. 1616, the *Promoting Access to Diabetic Shoes Act***, and is pleased to voice its strong support for this legislation. ANA commends Representatives Darin LaHood and Nanette Barragán for their leadership in advancing this important bill that will improve Medicare beneficiaries’ access to care by allowing nurse practitioners (NPs) to document a patient’s need for therapeutic shoes without requiring an additional physician visit for documentation.

ANA also recognizes the Subcommittee’s continued focus on Medicare provider payment reform through inclusion of **H.R. 9693, the *Patients First Act of 2026***. ANA looks forward to continuing to work with the bill sponsors and the Subcommittee to further improve the legislation and build on the advances it makes to ensure longstanding, meaningful, and patient-centric reforms that reflect the realities of today’s healthcare system and appropriately recognize the vital contributions of nurses and all healthcare providers.

ANA is the premier organization representing the interests of the nation’s more than five million registered nurses (RNs) through its constituent and state nurses associations, organizational affiliates, and individual members. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting a safe and ethical work environment, supporting the health and wellness of nurses, and advocating on healthcare issues affecting nurses and the public. ANA members include the four advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) roles: NPs, clinical nurse specialists (CNSs), certified nurse-midwives (CNMs), and certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs). Nurses serve in direct care, care coordination, administration, and leadership roles across the full spectrum of healthcare settings.

APRNs are essential to delivering timely, high-quality care to Medicare beneficiaries, particularly in rural and medically underserved communities. NPs alone conduct more than one billion patient visits annually and represent more than 40 percent of the primary

care workforce. Yet, outdated Medicare statutory and regulatory barriers continue to unnecessarily constrain APRN practice and can make it more difficult for patients to receive care from the qualified healthcare professionals they trust and rely on. H.R. 1616 offers a commonsense example of how Congress can remove one such barrier and better align Medicare policy with today's healthcare workforce.

Therapeutic footwear is an important component of care for eligible Medicare beneficiaries with diabetes and severe diabetes-related foot disease. Under current law, a physician must certify a beneficiary's need for therapeutic footwear, even when an NP is managing the patient's diabetes. As a result, patients may be required to have an additional physician visit for evaluation and certification, despite already receiving diabetes care from an NP. This duplicative and unnecessary requirement can delay access to care that can prevent diabetes-related complications, create additional administrative burden, and may result in added costs for patients and the Medicare program, while failing to recognize the clinical role of NPs in managing diabetes and other chronic conditions.

H.R. 1616 would modernize Medicare policy to allow NPs to satisfy documentation requirements for Medicare coverage of therapeutic shoes for individuals with diabetes. The bill does not create a new Medicare benefit. Rather, it updates federal policy to appropriately recognize NPs for purposes of documenting a patient's need for an existing Medicare benefit, helping patients receive necessary care without the additional and unnecessary step of seeing a physician solely to satisfy a documentation requirement.

ANA urges the Subcommittee to advance H.R. 1616 and continue working to eliminate unnecessary federal barriers that prevent nurses and other qualified healthcare professionals from practicing to the full extent of their education and training. ANA has long identified a myriad of reforms that will improve access to care, reduce unnecessary administrative burden, and ensure Medicare policy better reflects how healthcare is delivered today.

ANA recognizes the Subcommittee for its leadership and for its willingness to consider our perspective on this critical issue. We stand ready to work with you to advance policies to further improve the Medicare program and the beneficiaries it serves. Please contact Tim Nanof, ANA's Executive Vice President for Policy and Government Affairs, at Tim.Nanof@ana.org with any questions.