

FUTURE OF NURSING™

Campaign for Action



The Free Market Case for Full Practice Authority

A number of think tanks that value free markets, saying they create high-quality solutions, have voiced support for reducing barriers to care provided by advanced practice registered nurses. The American Action Forum, American Enterprise Institute, Americans for Prosperity, Cato Institute, Florida TaxWatch, Heritage Foundation, and Pacific Research Institute have advocated that states make this change to reduce unnecessary government regulation and spending, and increase competition.

Three organizations have been directly involved in improving state laws: Americans for Prosperity has actively supported full practice legislation in multiple states, including Nebraska and West Virginia; the Heritage Foundation was widely credited for helping in West Virginia's recent full practice legislation; and Florida TaxWatch has advocated for reforms in Florida.

Below are excerpts from columns and reports by scholars and experts that have been published by these research and educational institutions.

American Action Forum

Affordable Care Act and Doctor Shortages: A Bad Situation Worsens

<https://www.americanactionforum.org/insight/affordable-care-act-and-doctor-shortages-a-bad-situation-worsens/>

“Public policy that actively encourages an expansion in the supply of nurse practitioner and physician assistant primary care service providers is certainly warranted. Resistance to expanding scope-of practice laws for nurse practitioners by physician groups, alleging that such laws will place patient health at risk (although repeated studies show this to be false), is a regulatory barrier to addressing growing nationwide primary health care needs. The credentialing and payment policies of managed health care plans are linked to state practice laws, thus often constraining the role of nurse practitioners in delivering primary care. However, exacerbated by the implementation of the Affordable Health Care Act, political resistance to expanding the scope-of-practice of nurse practitioners will likely dissipate over the next few years when local legislators are confronted with the reality of primary care demands in their home states.”

American Enterprise Institute (AEI)

How nurse practitioners can help save US health care

<https://www.aei.org/publication/how-nurse-practitioners-can-help-save-us-health-care/>

This blog post cites the *Wall Street Journal* as well as an innovation expert:

- “US health care is an industry in desperate need of disruptive innovation.”
- “Nurse practitioners can be... a ...disruptive innovation.”
- “[S]tudies have shown that nurse practitioners typically devote more time to patients during consultations than physicians do and emphasize prevention and

health maintenance to a greater degree But many states have regulations that prevent nurse practitioners from diagnosing diseases or from prescribing treatment that they are fully capable of handling....This is one of the many little battles that will need to be won to bottom-up transform health care in a way that boosts value and innovation.”

A faster, better, cheaper path to filling the doctor shortage

<https://www.aei.org/publication/a-faster-better-cheaper-path-to-filling-the-doctor-shortage/print/>

“A recent [report](#) I’ve completed on the state of North Carolina shows that a much faster, better and cheaper path is available to address this problem: removing unnecessary restrictions on the scope of practice for advanced practice nurses (APRNs). APRNs include nurse practitioners, nurse midwives (CNMs), nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) and clinical nurse specialists (CNSs). North Carolina is among the [31 states that have yet to legislatively authorize ‘full \[scope of\] practice’ status for all nurse practitioners](#) (and there are similar regulatory barriers that stand in the way of CNMs, CRNAs, and CNSs from being able to practice to the full extent of their training.

“The result of such laws is that the time of both physicians and APRNs that might otherwise have gone into patient care ends up being squandered on unnecessary regulatory compliance/supervision. Thus, while our findings certainly are important for North Carolina, many other states with similar restrictive regulations would benefit in a comparable fashion if they would adopt the least restrictive scope of practice rules now in operation in states such as Arizona, Montana, New Mexico and Utah.

“....We concluded that between 2012 and 2019, the number of APRNs would increase an additional 24.4% were North Carolina to adopt the least restrictive rules for APRNs.

- It could eliminate the shortage of OB/GYNs while reducing the shortage of non-OB/GYN primary care doctors by 83%.
- It could eliminate at least 85% of the projected shortage of anesthesiologists.
- It could decrease the overall shortage of nonfederal physicians by 41%.

“Modernizing regulation of APRNs would result in the following economic impacts (including direct, indirect and induced effects on the broader economy):

- At least 3,800 new jobs (possibly up to 7,128)
- An annual increase in economic output of at least \$477 million (possibly up to \$883 million)
- This expansion also would produce annual health system cost savings ranging from \$433 million to \$4.3 billion.

“We also reviewed a sizable body of evidence related to whether there was any difference in quality of care when it was provided by APRNs rather than physicians. There is extensive empirical evidence that APRN practice outcomes are at least equivalent to those of physicians to which they are compared. And on some metrics, such as patient satisfaction, some studies have found APRN care is actually better.”

Americans for Prosperity

Letter to Lawmakers in Support of West Virginia Proposed Law

<https://americansforprosperity.org/americans-for-prosperity-west-virginia-releases-letter-to-lawmakers-on-expanding-the-scope-of-practice-for-nurses-aprns/>

From the Americans for Prosperity letter to state lawmakers: “I write in support of House Bill 4334. This proposed legislation expands the scope of practice for Advance Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) allowing for increased access to vital healthcare services by consumers in the Mountain State by eliminating excessive regulations that prevent APRNs from utilizing the full extent of their certified skills.

“Americans for Prosperity West Virginia is committed to eliminating unnecessary government restrictions and promoting common-sense, free market solutions to the problems that face our great state. One such problem is the access to vital healthcare needs by a rural population.

“It is imperative that West Virginia take steps, like HB 4334, to modernize its system of healthcare. We believe that states should be free to innovate and solve problems as they see necessary. This legislation will ensure that our state is acting to do just that, by opening up the availability of local care, increasing efficiency and providing more choice for West Virginians.

“While this free market solution will make it easier for all West Virginians to have access to healthcare, it will especially benefit poorer and more rural communities. In the process, APRNs will find this measure attractive, helping to not only retain persons practicing this much needed profession but to attract more APRNs to our state. This legislation represents a strong first step in state-based free market health care reform.”

Cato Institute

Medical Licensing in the States: Some Room for Agreement—and Reform

<http://www.cato.org/blog/medical-licensing-states-some-room-agreement-reform>

“Another proposal to address this doctor shortfall is to expand the role of nurse practitioners (NP’s), who are registered nurses who have also received a graduate degree in nursing. States determine what services these NP’s can perform, and their scope of practice varies significantly. States that currently have reduced or restricted scope of practice should explore loosening these restrictions, because doing so could go some way to addressing the looming doctor shortage and increase access to care without a reduction in quality. ... Skeptics of expanded scope of practice raise the concern that the quality of care could suffer as some duties are shifted from physicians to NP’s, but a systematic review of 26 recent studies in a **health policy brief** for *Health Affairs* found that ‘health status, treatment practices, and prescribing behavior were consistent between nurse practitioners and physicians.’ **Some studies** even find that NP’s score higher in patient satisfaction than physicians for certain services. In a time when health care policy at the state level so often seems to be gridlocked, there are still channels to improve the access to care without increasing costs or reducing quality.”

Florida TaxWatch

News release: Expanding scope of practice would provide Floridians with more cost-effective, accessible healthcare.

<http://www.floridatxwatch.org/PressRoom/TabId/387/ArtMID/1733/ArticleID/60/Statement-On-Senate-Bill-Addressing-Scope-Of-Practice-For-Advanced-Registered-Nurse-Practitioners-And-Physicians-Assistants-Which-Would-Improve-Healthcare-Outcomes-And-Costs.aspx>

“If Florida wants to continue to be the greatest state to live in the country, it must provide world-class, affordable healthcare services that are readily available for all citizens,” said Florida TaxWatch President and CEO Dominic M. Calabro. “Removing the barriers of practice for ARNPs and PAs is one of the many cost-effective ways that Florida can move its healthcare system into the 21st century and ensure that our residents are receiving the care they need.”

“Our reports on expanding scope of practice for APRNs and PAs can be found [here](#).”

The Heritage Foundation

The Impact of the Affordable Care Act on the Health Care Workforce

<http://report.heritage.org/bg2887>

“Entrenchment of professional organizations has undercut reform in many states, even though the looming shortages will necessitate the full use of APRNs and other non-physician providers. Insurance companies and government agencies should remove obstacles to certification, eliminating payment issues. State legislators should examine the potential role of APRNs as a way to increase access and achieve additional savings. Given the current critical juncture of demand and supply of medical services, it is essential to ensure that all hands are on deck to care for the surge of patients.”

Pacific Research Institute

Memo to the Governor: Don't Close the Door on Better Health Care Ideas

<http://www.pacificresearch.org/article/memo-to-governor-dont-close-the-door-on-better-health-care-ideas/>

“Also, retail-based ‘convenient clinics’ are the competitive answer to long waits in an emergency room for basic services. Nurse practitioners are qualified to provide basic care, and for very affordable prices. The state should reform ‘scope of practice’ laws affecting them so that Californians, and especially the uninsured, can take advantage of this emerging market.”