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As an experienced advanced practice nurse, who has been employed exclusively in the State of Florida in corporate, private and public clinics for the past 18 years, I have experienced first hand the barriers created by outdated rules and statutes, which mandate the degree to which I can use my education and training. Although many of us have created “workarounds” in our day-to-day NP roles, governing documents of organizations and third-party payers frequently remind us of our “supervised” status, often requiring us to involve physicians for additional signatures or troubleshoot reimbursement issues.

NP colleagues across the nation, and the patients they serve, are reaping benefits from expansion of their scope of practice, with 19 states realizing “full practice authority”. Achieving this status was a result of concerted effort between NP leadership and active NP membership. Active NP membership included practicing NPs who recognized the need to get physically and emotionally involved over the long haul to change the course of their future!

Our 2013-14 Florida legislative session included conversation and action toward “full practice authority”. In fact, thanks to NP leaders and active NP members, multiple stakeholders recognized Florida NPs as necessary contributors in the redesign of health care in our state. As an active NP member of ANA, AANP, FNA, FNP, FLAPN, STTI and NONPF, I sought to understand our practice evidence; responded to blogs, rants and editorials; wrote to and spoke with legislators; and made campaign donations. As an active NP leader, I participated in “think tank” sessions, such as the Florida Nurse Practitioner Action Coalition (FNPAC); wrote and edited editorials; and prepared formal “stakeholder updates”, which were distributed to faculty colleagues, graduate students, alumni and members of the Central Florida Advanced Practice Nurse Coalition (CFAPNC).

As Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Central Florida, I seek to educate emerging NPs to practice within their scope and to question why Florida is so restrictive. As vice-president of CFANPC, I challenge my NP colleagues to become more active as NP members. If elected, serving as your president will be an honor; however, as proven in other states, it will take synergy between NP leaders and active NP members to truly modernize the role of NPs in our state. Are you “all in”? If so, let’s roll!