



Florida Nurse Practitioner Network

Talking Points on SB 188/ HB 677 by Senator Mike Bennett and Representative Juan Carlos Zapata

- Florida is one of **only two states** that do not allow ARNPs to prescribe controlled medicines.
- FL Agency for Health Care Administration evaluated ARNP ability to prescribe controlled medicines (1997) as well as Senate Interim Report 2009-117. **Both recommend allowing ARNPs to prescribe controlled medicines.**
- There has **never been a revocation of controlled substance prescription** privilege law in any of the 48 states. Many states have recently granted expansion of controlled medicines to ARNPs. **Diversion rates have not increased in states where NPs already prescribe CSs.**
- **American College of Physicians** recently published a formalized statement which acknowledges and endorses **“the growing need for Nurse Practitioners”**.
- As of February, 2010 there were **more than 13,000 ARNPs** registered with the State of Florida.
- Currently only **2% of medical school graduates choose primary care as a career. 35% of Florida ARNPs are certified as Family Nurse Practitioners.**
- As of 2015 all of Florida’s ARNPs will be required to earn doctorate level education.
- **Florida Worker’s Compensation recognizes ARNPs as Health Care Providers.**
- Healthcare Integrity & Protection Data Banks reports the number of negative licensure actions, civil judgments, criminal convictions, state agency/health plan reports:
44 complaints for 10,227 ARNPs; ratio of 1 complaint to 232 ARNPs.
1762 complaints for 57,000 MD/interns/Residents; ratio of 1 complaint per 33 MD/Interns/Residents.
229 complaints for 3,760 DO/Interns/Residents; ratio of 1 complaint per 17 DO/Interns/Residents.
- ARNPs see an average of **76.8 patients per week over 40 million patient visits a year.**
- **ARNP’s spend an average of 3.9 hours per week getting prescriptions signed. By removing this barrier ARNPs could see more than 2 million more patients each year.**

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- Presently **forty percent of Floridians have inadequate access to basic health care**. Our elderly citizens also exceed the national average with a significant and growing population of 17.6%. These statistics become further complicated by the significant shortage of healthcare providers in Florida.
- Nearly one in five Americans -- 56 million individuals -- are medically disenfranchised, meaning they have inadequate or no access to primary care physicians because of the shortage of such physicians
 - According to the American Association of Medical Colleges, 25 percent (6,849) of Florida physicians are 60 and older.
 - The number of practicing primary care and internal medicine physician's further limits available health care with 15 percent of Florida doctors surveyed confirming they are in family medicine and 13 percent are internists.
- This bill allows ARNPs to meet the needs of their patients who require scheduled medications either for pain control or behavior modification. Florida sustains more than 10,000 ARNPs throughout the state available to increase availability of care no matter what their geographic location.
- **Florida ARNPs have been prescribing medications with the exception of scheduled drugs since 1987.** ARNPs are authorized to prescribe through a collaborative practice agreement with a physician licensed under Chapter 458 or 459 and may only prescribe those medications used within their scope of practice and contained within the protocol. However, ARNPs are educated to prescribe controlled substances along with other medications through their formal educations.
- In compliance with Federal law, this bill would also require ARNPs to obtain a Federal DEA Number. The DEA issued regulations **in 1993** which permitted Advanced Practice Nurses to obtain DEA numbers for the purpose of prescribing controlled substances. This privilege is closely scrutinized by the Federal Government.
- Since states have begun to allow ARNPs to prescribe controlled substances, no state has withdrawn or limited the ARNPs' ability to prescribe.
- There has been no evidence to support that states that authorize nurse practitioners to prescribe controlled substances directly increases prescription drug abuse. Florida is **one of only two states** that does not allow ARNPs to prescribe these medications to their patients who require them.

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Florida Access to Care Issues

- Access to quality health services was identified as the top ranking rural health priority in a national survey of state and local health leaders and stakeholders.
- There are **41 Federally Qualified Health Centers and 142 Rural Health Clinics** providing care at **372 sites** in Florida. Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ARNP) or Physician Assistant (PA) (by federal requirement) must furnish care 50% of the time while the clinic is open.
- Many physicians no longer take Medicaid. Many small rural hospitals have closed while other health care facilities are in financial straits.
- 2,800,000 citizens in Florida live in a Health Professional Shortage Area, 15% of the population: (Kaiser Family Foundation accessed 7/3/09).
- The uninsured are much less likely to have a source of health care or be seen by a provider in the last year; they are also much more likely to delay seeking care.
- American Academy of Family Physicians predicts a shortage of **40,000 primary care doctors by 2020** with fewer doctors in the rural areas.
- **Nonavailability of transportation** or resources makes access to care harder if distance is a factor. **This often results in ambulance transport to the Emergency Room thereby tripling the cost.**
- **90% of Americans** prefer to receive care in their homes if diagnosed with a terminal illness. Hospice based care facilitates this preference, provides nursing care and support.
 - ❖ By restricting ARNPs ability to prescribe controlled medicine an added burden is placed on the patient. By requiring the patient to seek additional care for the purpose of getting a prescription signed is not in the patient's best interest nor is it cost effective. Currently a minimum of 4 hours per week is wasted waiting to get a controlled medicine prescription signed.

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