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MARCH 24, 2010

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NURSE PRACTITIONERS CALL FOR LOWER COST HEALTH CARE

On the eve of an historic vote to provide health care to millions of Americans, hundreds of nurse practitioners from every corner of Florida are in Tallahassee to protest the failure of state lawmakers to follow the advice of their staff to lower costs and increase health care options for up to a million Floridians.

A Senate Health Care Committee Report (Interim Report 2009-117) recommends giving qualified Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners (ARNPs) authority to write prescriptions for controlled substances. "Florida needs to provide its citizens more, not less access to health care" says Tallahassee Nurse practitioner Ying Mai Kung.

Giving Florida's 13,000 nurse practitioners increased prescription authority will allow a million more patients to be seen in a timely manner, reduce emergency room visits, which will lower health care costs to taxpayers, and improve care to rural and impoverished communities.

Florida and Alabama are the only states in America that do not allow qualified and educated Nurse practitioners to write prescriptions for medications to control anxiety, cough, pain and other ailments. "The Florida Medical Association is protecting its pocket book, not patients when it opposes giving qualified nurse practitioners the appropriate prescriptive authority to help patients," says Florida Nurse Practitioner Network President Christopher Saslo.

All Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners have a minimum of a Master's Degree with education in specific drug therapies. Senate Bill 188, by Sen. Mike Bennett (R-Bradenton) and House Bill 677 by Rep. Juan Zapata (R-Miami) would bring Florida health care into the 21st century. Neither bill has been heard in committee. According to Bennett "The argument that nurse practitioners don't have adequate training have been proven false in 48 other states".

Abby Strickland runs a clinic in the rural Florida Panhandle town of Chattahoochee. "There is no Medical Doctor in the clinic or the town. My hands are really tied by the prescriptive limitations," says Strickland. "It's not me these limitations are hurting, it is my patients who suffer'.

As Americans struggle to find lower health care costs, Florida lawmakers are ignoring a solution right under their noses" says FNPN President Dr. Christopher Saslo, DNS, ARNP-BC, FAANP. Representative Nick Thompson and Senator Don Gaetz and their friends in the Florida Medical Association are responsible for the roadblock to better patient care. "It is time to stop underutilizing available resources for health care for a million Floridians. It's critical that Lawmakers remember their constituents need their help, not the FMA," says Saslo

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A copy of the Florida Senate Report can be found at:
http://www.flsenate.gov/data/Publications/2009/Senate/reports/interim_reports/pdf/2009-117hr.pdf