



February 5, 2014

United States House of Representatives

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the 53 undersigned organizations representing the Nursing Community, we respectfully request that you refrain from signing a Dear Colleague letter being circulated by Representatives Michael Grimm (R-NY) and Ann Kirkpatrick (D-AZ), which expresses concerns with a proposed modification to the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Nursing Handbook. This change would allow Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) full practice authority within the VHA system. Collectively, the Nursing Community represents nearly one million Registered Nurses, APRNs, nurse executives, nursing students, nursing faculty, and nurse researchers. Our organizations collaborate to advance sound policy decisions that promote improvements to our nation's healthcare system.

We commend the VHA's proposed recognition of APRNs (including nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and clinical nurse specialists) as full practice providers in the VHA's Nursing Handbook. We believe this will further facilitate timely delivery of high-quality health care to our nation's Service men and women. APRNs are educated to provide evidence-based care to specific patient populations and are qualified to diagnose and treat a variety of conditions. In addition, APRNs are required to pass rigorous national certification examination to demonstrate their knowledge and competency.

Recognizing APRNs as full practice providers would allow the VHA to maximize the utilization of advanced practice providers by alleviating unnecessary physician oversight, thus increasing access to care for our Veterans and military populations. This is consistent with recommendations outlined in the Institute of Medicine's 2010 report the *Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, which includes the recommendation that "Advanced practice registered nurses should be able to practice to the full extent of their education and training."

Yet, Reps. Grimm's and Kirkpatrick's letter does not support this effort, and therefore we urge you to not sign it. If our organizations can be of any assistance, or if you have any questions, please contact the convener of the Nursing Community Dr. Suzanne Miyamoto, at Smiyamoto@aacn.nche.edu or 202-463-6930, ext. 247.

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing

American Academy of Nursing
American Assembly for Men in Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
American Association of Neuroscience Nurses
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordination
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Nephrology Nurses' Association
American Nurses Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Pediatric Surgical Nurses Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Society for Pain Management Nursing
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses
Association of Public Health Nurses
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Association of Veterans Affairs Nurse Anesthetists
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Dermatology Nurses' Association
Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association
Emergency Nurses Association
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
Infusion Nurses Society
International Association of Forensic Nurses
International Nurses Society on Addictions
International Society of Psychiatric Nurses
National American Arab Nurses Association
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers
National Gerontological Nursing Association
National Nursing Centers Consortium
National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Oncology Nursing Society

Pediatric Endocrinology Nursing Society
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Public Health Nursing Section, American Public Health Association
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
The Quad Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations