



September 18, 2023

The Honorable Mariannette Miller-Meeks
Chairwoman
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Subcommittee on Health
364 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20003

The Honorable Julia Brownley
Ranking Member
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Subcommittee on Health
550 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Miller-Meeks and Ranking Member Brownley:

On behalf of the 47 undersigned organizations representing the Nursing Community Coalition (NCC), we appreciate the opportunity to submit a statement for the record regarding the Subcommittee's hearing on, "VA's Federal Supremacy Initiative: Putting Veterans First?" The NCC is a cross section of education, practice, research, and regulation within the nursing profession representing Registered Nurses (RNs), Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs),¹ nurse leaders, boards of nursing, students, faculty, and researchers. Together, we write in support of removing barriers to practice and allowing for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) to practice to the full extent of their education and abilities within the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA).

As the largest segment of the health care profession², nursing is involved at every point of care. We recognize that, particularly during these unprecedented times, ensuring the health care of our veterans and patients across the country is crucial. By providing anesthesia services across the entire care continuum, CRNAs not only bring much needed support and expertise during this crisis, but their full range of skills are imperative in the future as well. The VA has acknowledged the benefits of allowing Advance Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) to work to the top of their scope, writing in their 2022-2028 Strategic plan, "Data demonstrates that Full Practice Authority (FPA) for APRNs has a positive impact on wait times in Mental Health, Specialty Care and Primary Care."³ We encourage the VA to develop National Standards for CRNAs to allow them to practice to the top of their scope for the benefit of veterans.

¹ APRNs include certified nurse-midwives (CNMs), certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) and nurse practitioners (NPs).

² United States Census Bureau. (2021) Who are our Health Care Workers? Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/04/who-are-our-health-care-workers.html>

³Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Years 2022-28 Strategic Plan. Retrieved from: <https://department.va.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/va-strategic-plan-2022-2028.pdf>

Various studies, recommendations, and outcomes have consistently found that anesthesia care by CRNAs is equally safe with or without physician supervision.⁴ Other federal health care systems, the Army, Navy, and Air Force, have been utilizing full practice authority for CRNAs.⁵ In addition to their skill set in general anesthesia, CRNAs are also taking the lead on non-opioid or opioid sparing pain management practices, a critical skill in light of the ongoing opioid epidemic and the prevalence of chronic pain among veterans.

Our nation's veterans and their families deserve access to timely, cost effective, and high-quality care within the VA health system. Removing these barriers for CRNAs helps meet this aim. If our organizations can be of any assistance, or if you have any questions, please contact the Nursing Community Coalition's Executive Director, Rachel Stevenson at rstevenson@thenursingcommunity.org.

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
American Association of Heart Failure Nurses
American Association of Neuroscience Nurses
American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Nurses Association
American Nursing Informatics Association
American Organization for Nursing Leadership
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Public Health Association, Public Health Nursing Section
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
Association for Radiologic and Imaging Nursing
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
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Dermatology Nurses' Association
Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
International Association of Forensic Nurses
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Hispanic Nurses

⁴ Dulisse, B., & Cromwell, J. (2010). No harm found when nurse anesthetists work without supervision by physicians. Health Affairs, 29,1469-1475. Retrieved from: <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2008.0966>

⁵ Department of the Army, Army Regulation, Medical Services: Clinical Quality Management, 2009 p.26 Retrieved from: <https://www.gmo.amedd.army.mil/credentialing/FY%2004/Regulations/AR%2040-68.pdf>

National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Neonatal Nurses
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Black Nurses Association
National Council of State Boards of Nursing
National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers
National League for Nursing
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurses Society

cc:

Representative Amata Coleman Radewagen
Representative Jack Bergman
Representative Greg Murphy
Representative Derrick Van Orden
Representative Morgan Luttrell
Representative Jen Kiggans
Representative Mike Levin
Representative Chris Deluzio
Representative Greg Landsman
Representative Nikki Budzinski