

AT THE CENTER TO CHAMPION NURSING IN AMERICA

Removing Barriers to Practice & Care

Health care in the United States is changing rapidly. Our population is aging and a growing number of Americans have health conditions that require more complex care than ever before. Demand for health care is rising and the supply of providers has not kept pace: 55 million Americans live in areas with a shortage of primary care providers.

How Nurses Can Help

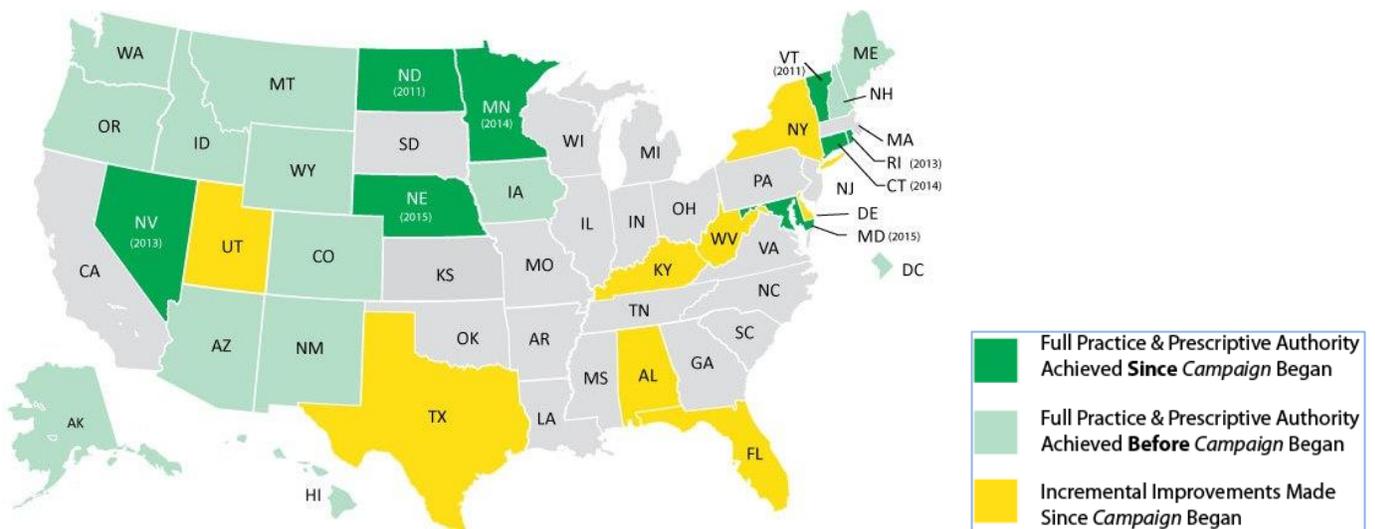
Nurse practitioners and other types of advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) are highly educated and qualified clinicians with the potential to ease the provider shortage. Fully utilizing APRNs would increase consumer access to health care and reduce unnecessary health care costs. In most states, however, outdated legal hurdles limit this potential.

These barriers often delay care to consumers, especially in rural and urban underserved areas where few clinicians are available to meet patient needs. Delays in care not only hurt consumers, but place added stress on family caregivers, who are all too often overwhelmed with providing and overseeing the care of a loved one. APRNs can provide consumers and their caregivers with access to convenient, cost-effective, and high quality care. We just need to remove the barriers.

Consumers in thirty states have limited access to nurse practitioners due to state laws that prevent these clinicians from working to the full extent of their education and training—training that has fully prepared these nurses to serve consumers in 21 states and the District of Columbia.

Progress to Date

Since the *Campaign for Action* began, eight states have removed statutory barriers that prevented nurse practitioners from providing care to the full extent of their education and training, helping to increase consumers' access to care.



Major Publications in Support of Removing Barriers to Practice & Care

The turning tide of legislation coincides with the publication of several high-level reports, journal articles and mainstream media coverage that recommend states remove outdated barriers to APRN practice and care. Some relevant publications include:

- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: *Assessing Progress on the IOM Report the Future of Nursing*, (2015).
- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE): “Impact of State Scope of Practice Laws and Other Factors on the Practice and Supply of Primary Care Nurse Practitioners,”(2015).
- RAND Corporation: *Independent Assessment of the Health Care Delivery Systems and Management Processes of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Assessment B (Health Care Capabilities)*, (2015).
- Federal Trade Commission: “Policy Perspectives: Competition and the Regulation of Advanced Practice Nurses,” (2014).
- Health Affairs: “The Latest Data On Primary Care Nurse Practitioners And Physicians: Can We Afford To Waste Our Workforce?” (2013).
- American Hospital Association: “Workforce Roles in a Redesigned Primary Care Model,” (2013).
- National Governors Association: “The Role of Nurse Practitioners in Meeting Increased Demand for Primary Care,” (2012).
- New York Times Editorial: “When the Doctor is Not Needed,” (2012).
- The Atlantic: “Why Nurses Need More Authority” (2012)
- Institute of Medicine: *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, (2011).
- Josiah Macy Foundation: *Who Will Provide Primary Care and How Will They Be Trained?* (2010)

Legislative Activity to Remove Barriers to Practice & Care in 2017

State legislatures are increasingly turning to APRNs to improve access and reduce health care costs in their states. Below are some of the states considering favorable legislation in 2017:

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| • Arizona | • South Carolina |
| • Hawaii | • South Dakota |
| • Massachusetts | • Tennessee |
| • Missouri | • Texas |
| • Nevada | • Virginia |
| • North Carolina | • Utah |
| • Oklahoma | • Wisconsin |
| • Pennsylvania | |

Federal Legislation

On May 25, 2016, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) officially proposed to amend its regulations to permit full practice authority, with the exception of prescribing controlled substances, of all VA advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) when they are acting within the scope of their VA employment. This proposed rule would, as the VA states: "increase veterans' access to VA health care by expanding the pool of qualified health care professionals who are authorized to provide primary health care and other related health care services to the full extent of their education, training, and certification, without the clinical supervision of physicians. This rule would permit VA to use its health care resources more effectively and in a manner that is consistent with the role of APRNs in the non-VA health care sector, while maintaining the patient-centered, safe, high-quality health care that veterans receive from VA." The proposed rule specifically cites the IOM Future of Nursing study as justification for the proposed change

How We Can Help You & How to Contact Us

Looking to get involved? AARP staff members at the Center to Champion Nursing in America are happy to connect you with the organizations in your state, like the Action Coalition or AARP state office, that are working to remove barriers to APRN practice and care. Looking for help? We can also provide guidance, talking points, and assistance with letters of support, op-eds, and testimony. Here's how to contact us:

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