

**American Nurses Association**  
8515 Georgia Avenue, Suite 400  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3492  
Tel (301) 628-5000  
Fax (301) 628-5001  
[www.NursingWorld.org](http://www.NursingWorld.org)

**NEWS RELEASE**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 4, 2015**

**CONTACT:**

**Adam Sachs, 301-628-5034**  
[adam.sachs@ana.org](mailto:adam.sachs@ana.org)  
**Jemarion Jones, 301-628-5198**  
[jemarion.jones@ana.org](mailto:jemarion.jones@ana.org)  
[www.nursingworld.org](http://www.nursingworld.org)

## **ANA Urges Support for Bill to Increase Veterans' Access to APRNs' Services**

**SILVER SPRING, MD** – The American Nurses Association (ANA) applauds Representatives Sam Graves (R-MO) and Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) for their leadership in introducing the “Improving Veterans Access to Quality Healthcare Act of 2015.” The bill, H.R. 1247, allows Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) who work in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facilities ‘full practice authority.’ Full practice authority means allowing APRNs to practice to the full extent of their education and training and provides a common-sense solution to the challenges associated with ensuring America’s veterans have access to high quality health care services.

“This legislation will make a big difference in meeting the health care needs of our nation’s veterans,” said ANA President Pamela Cipriano, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN. “As the VA works to address staff shortages that have contributed to delays in veterans’ access to care, an important first step is to remove barriers that prevent APRNs from providing a full range of services.”

APRNs are [advanced practice registered nurses](#) who have completed formal graduate education leading at least to a master's degree in nursing, and increasingly to a doctor of nursing practice degree, in one of four APRN roles that provide primary, preventive and chronic care: nurse practitioners (NP), certified nurse-midwives (CNM), clinical nurse specialists (CNS) and certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNA).

Currently, APRNs who work in VHA facilities are subject to the laws of the state in which the facility is located. While some states have removed restrictive practice regulations, in other states APRNs face regulations that limit their scope of practice, with veterans' access to care suffering as a result.

By recognizing NPs, CNMs, CNSs and CRNAs to their full practice authority, the VHA can make the fullest use of these critical members of their health care workforce, maximize care delivery and minimize waits and delays for care. The bill is consistent with the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine report *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, and with proposals under consideration in the VHA.

Additionally, VHA recognition of APRN full practice authority would make the VHA consistent with the models already practiced by the U.S. Armed Forces, Indian Health Service and Public Health Service systems where veterans can now use their VHA health benefits under the Veterans Access Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-146).

ANA joins other national nursing organizations, representing more than 240,000 APRNs, in calling on members of Congress to support this important legislation. These include the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, and the American College of Nurse-Midwives.

###

*ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 3.1 million registered nurses through its constituent and state nurses associations and its organizational affiliates. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.*