



March 13, 2015

The Honorable Sam Graves
1415 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky
2367 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Graves and Schakowsky:

On behalf of 42 undersigned organizations representing the Nursing Community coalition, we are pleased to express our support for the “Improving Veterans Access to Quality Healthcare Act of 2015” and to urge its enactment. The Nursing Community builds consensus and advocates on a wide spectrum of policy issues. Our organizations are committed to improving the health and health care of our nation by collaborating to support the education, practice, and research of Registered Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs). Collectively, the Nursing Community represents nearly one million nurses, nursing students, and nursing faculty.

We support the “Improving Veterans Access to Quality Healthcare Act” because it recognizes all Veterans Health Administration APRNs as full practice providers and provides a common-sense solution to the challenges associated with ensuring America’s Veterans have access to the high-quality healthcare they need and deserve. By recognizing Nurse Practitioners, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, Clinical Nurse Specialists, and Certified Nurse-Midwives to their full practice authority, the VHA can make optimal use of these critical members of their healthcare workforce across the entire care continuum. Many of the APRNs practicing in the VHA are also Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, providing them with a unique clinical perspective. By allowing all APRNs to practice as full practice providers, the VHA can maximize care delivery and minimize waits and delays for critical services. The bill is also consistent with the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine report *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing *APRN Consensus Model*, and with proposals under consideration in the VHA.

Most importantly for our Veterans, VHA recognition of APRN full practice authority would make VHA healthcare delivery consistent with the models already practiced by our U.S. Armed Forces, Indian Health Service and Public Health Service systems where our Veterans can now use their VHA health benefits thanks to the Veterans Access Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-146). We also applaud your efforts to extend and expand the “Intermediate Care Technician” pilot program, which enables the immediate transition of combat medics, medical technicians and corpsman straight from the U.S. Armed Forces into the VHA system to provide care and advance their education and training.

In the interest of the Veterans for whom thousands of our members provide care within our VHA system, we thank you for introducing this legislation and look forward to help enact it into law. Our members provide invaluable care within the VHA system so our nation’s Veterans can receive timely access to the high quality care they deserve. This legislation will ensure the most efficient and effective use of these healthcare professionals. Please direct any questions to Frank Purcell, American Association

of Nurse Anesthetists Senior Director Federal Government Affairs, at fpurcell@aanadc.com, 202-741-9080.

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
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 Nurse Anesthetists
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 Society for Pain Management Nursing
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
Association for Radiologic and Imaging Nursing
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, Inc.
Dermatology Nurses' Association
Emergency Nurses Association
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
Infusion Nurses Society
International Association of Forensic Nurses
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
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 Council of State Boards of Nursing
National Nursing Centers Consortium
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Oncology Nursing Society
Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates