

November 24, 2008

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Dear Senator Orié,

As a Nurse Practitioner in the state of Pennsylvania, I am contacting you in support of approving 16A-5124 CRNP General Regulations. The proposed changes will improve access to health care for Pennsylvanians while becoming more consistent with the expanded scope of practice authorized by Act 48.

Having many years of experience in treating pediatric Hematology/Oncology patients, the schedule II, III, IV drug prescription restrictions have negatively impacted my ability to manage the many patients with pain issues. Pain is, unfortunately a very common issue that Hematology and Oncology patients face. Conditions such as sickle cell disease, as well as oncologic disorders are associated with both acute and chronic pain. Patients must be seen frequently, and pain plans continually established and updated. The current 72 hour restriction places a burden that I must seek out a physician for signature of ongoing needs for pain management. Many are able to realize cost savings by using mail order, reducing co payment costs but only if it is a 90 day supply. Once again, these regulations create obstacles to time and efficiency, both to me as a nurse practitioner, as well as the physician who must be available to sign prescriptions.

The removal of the 4:1 NP to physician ratio would improve access to care as there are fewer physicians to collaborate, a requirement to legally practice prescriptive authority. I am fortunate to practice at a University Hospital in an academic setting, where this ratio is not a problem, but many of my colleagues in rural and center city clinics are restricted.

Also, working in collaboration with physicians in the academic arena, who have much of their time designated, or protected, for academic and research activities, the Nurse Practitioner role is vitally important. Continuity of clinical patient care is one of my largest responsibilities. I have access to physician input if needed, but the impact of the regulations, especially as it relates prescriptive issues as stated above, has remained a hindrance to clinical practice. In many instances, I have had more up to date education and experience in use of pain medications than many of my physician colleagues.

I would appreciate your support in writing a letter to the PA State Board of Nursing in favor of approving the proposed regulations as proposed. As you know, they must pass the regulatory process in order for the changes to take place for final rule making. The proposed CRNP regulations would remove barriers to access of care for the residents of Pennsylvania.

With the goal of improving access to health care for all Pennsylvanians, approval of these Rules and Regulations will provide another step to improving healthcare for the residents of Pennsylvania.

Written comments must be submitted to the State Board of Nursing by December 8, 2008. Please reference with:

16A-5124: CRNP General Revisions
Attn: Ann Steffanic
Board Administrator
State Board of Nursing
PO BOX 2649
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649

I appreciate your time and attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, I can be reached at 412-418-0136.

Sincerely,

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