



POSITION PAPER in OPPOSITION to HB 421 INDEPENDANT PRACTICE OF ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSES

The physician members of the Illinois State Medical Society are strongly opposed to HB 421, a bill that would allow advanced practice nurses to provide the same level of care, completely independent from any physician collaboration, as anesthesiologists, pain management physicians, family physicians, pediatricians, obstetricians, and other specialists without requiring equivalent education and training standards that physicians are required by law to complete.

Advanced practice nurses (APNS) are not physicians. The differences in education and training between a physician and APN are significant. Education and training requirements exist for a reason, to ensure that the patient is properly treated.

Physicians have seven or more years of post-graduate education and more than 10,000 hours of clinical experience. Most APNs have just two to three years post-graduate training and less clinical experience than is obtained in the first year of a required two-year medical residency that physicians must complete before they are allowed to independently practice.

Allowing non-physician practitioners to expand their scope of practice through legislation rather than through education and training is not good public policy for improving access to quality care.

Under their bill, APNs would be able to provide the same services, with the exception of surgery, as physicians. Their bill would grant them full prescriptive authority, including schedule II drugs like opioids, and further allow them to provide anesthesia services, obstetrical care, and chronic and severe disease management, all independent of physician collaboration. This is not in the best interest of patients, particularly those who suffer from multiple medical conditions or require specialty care.

APNs would have you believe that they can fill a health care void in areas that suffer from physician shortages. This is not true. Research shows that in states where nurses practice independently, physicians and nurses continue to work in the same areas. Allowing the independent practice of APNs will not help solve the problem of health professional shortages in underserved areas.

Illinois is experiencing a shortage of both physicians and APNs for a number of reasons, including the dismal and untimely reimbursement rates under its Medicaid system, extreme delays in payments owed to them under the state's employee health system, lack of financial incentives offered to practice in underserved and rural areas, and lack of meaningful medical liability reform.

Illinois physicians are committed to ensuring that care is centered on each patient's needs and that each patient receives high-quality, cost effective care by a well-trained team of professionals led by a physician.

Please vote no on efforts to weaken standards which exist to protect patient safety and to oppose HB 421 that allows independent practice for APNs.