



November 12, 2015

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Texas Governor's Office
PO Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711
c/o Kara Crawford, Senior Advisor

Dear Governor Abbott:

The Texas Nurses Association, the Texas Nurse Practitioners, and the Texas Association of Nurse Anesthetists thank you for your vocal support of our military veterans and their health care needs. Our organizations represent many of the 20,000 advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) in Texas, and we would like to offer a solution to our collective veterans' health crisis—allow APRNs to practice to the full extent of their education and training.

As you pointed out in your Veterans Day speech at the Texas Capitol yesterday, the number of veterans on waiting lists of one month or longer has increased by 50 percent since 2014. Waiting lists often occur because the number of veterans needing care far exceeds the number of practitioners able to serve them. Allowing APRNs—nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, nurse midwives, and nurse anesthetists—to fully practice would substantially reduce the waiting lists for veterans in Texas. It would also improve patient outcomes and reduce costs. As 50 years of peer-reviewed research has demonstrated, APRNs provide safe, cost-effective, and quality health care equal to the level of physician care.

Currently, 21 states and the District of Columbia grant APRNs full-practice authority. Numerous organizations, including the National Governors Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Institute of Medicine, AARP, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, are calling for Texas and other states to do the same. We all stand ready to support you in ensuring that veterans—who have put their lives on the line to save ours—have access to quality health care.

And patients are not the only ones to benefit. A 2012 study by noted Texas economist Ray Perryman estimated the economic impact to Texas of allowing the almost 20,000 APRNs in Texas to practice fully:

- \$700 million in increased tax receipts to state and local governments;
- More than 97,000 permanent jobs;
- An increase of \$16 billion in spending and \$8 billion in state economic output annually; and most importantly,
- Improved patient outcomes and reduced overall health care costs.

The situation of our veterans' health care system is indeed urgent, but fortunately, there is a common-sense solution at hand. Help our state empower APRNs to deliver the services they are educated and trained to provide. Allowing advanced practice nurses to fully practice in Texas will save money and more importantly, it will save lives.

Our Texas APRNs and the associations that represent them stand ready to support our deserving veterans and our Governor in helping to solve this crisis.



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