

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

NEWS RELEASE



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CONTACT:

Adam Sachs, 301-628-5034
adam.sachs@ana.org
Mary McNamara, 301-628-5198
mary.mcnamara@ana.org
Mary Stewart, 301-628-5038
mary.stewart@ana.org
www.nursingworld.org

**ANA SUPPORTS PATIENT ACCESS TO
LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS OF THEIR CHOICE**

SILVER SPRING, MD – The American Nurses Association (ANA) supports ensuring that patients have direct access to the full scope of services offered by nurses and other legally authorized health care providers of their choice, a right that now is threatened by organized medicine’s efforts to restrict the scope of practice of licensed health care professionals.

ANA took the lead in 2006 to form the Coalition for Patients Rights (CPR) to protect against divisive initiatives, such as the American Medical Association’s (AMA) Scope of Practice Partnership, that would limit patients’ access and choice. The Coalition’s 36 national professional membership organizations represent over three million licensed health care professionals.

CPR fights to protect patients’ rights and the “scope of practice” -- the range of health care-related activities and services which a health care professional is educated, and certified or licensed, to provide – for a broad range of health care professionals. ANA is particularly concerned that organized medicine’s initiatives would limit patients’ access to the services of Registered Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs). ANA believes RNs and APRNs must be allowed to practice to the full extent of their abilities to provide high-quality, cost-effective services. This access and ability to choose is particularly important for patients in medically underserved and rural areas, as health care needs grow and individuals assume more responsibility for their own care.

“Patients deserve to have access to the expert care that nurses can give them. Doctors do not have the right to impede nurses merely because we threaten their ‘territory,’ ” said ANA Chief Executive Officer Linda J. Stierle, MSN, RN, NEA-BC. “We can do more to improve patient care by working together rather than at odds with each other.”

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RNs and APRNs are required to meet educational degree requirements, including clinical training, and pass rigorous exams to obtain a license from a state board of nursing. The AMA's Scope of Practice Partnership and other similar organized medicine-led efforts can affect the scope of practice of both RNs and APRNs, which are set by state practice acts.

Many APRNs are licensed to provide services such as making diagnoses, prescribing medications and admitting patients to hospitals. In several states, APRNs may practice with limited or no physician supervision. APRNs include Nurse Practitioners (NP), Certified Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS), Certified Nurse Midwives (CNM) and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA).

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The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 2.9 million registered nurses through its 54 constituent member nurses associations, its 23 organizational affiliates serving 330,000 members of national nursing specialty organizations, and its workforce advocacy affiliate, the Center for American Nurses. The 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.