

CPR Comment on The Huffington Post Web site article

“The Other Health Care Crisis,” (8/4/10)

By Tom Silva

Posted by: CPR (8/4/10)

As you point out, the primary care provider shortage isn't something new. And it will only get worse as millions of Americans become eligible for health coverage under health reform.

Given this pressing need, it's critical that patients have access to a broad spectrum of health care professionals who can provide high-quality and cost-effective care, including those who aren't MDs/DOs.

Examples such as these support the need for patient access to all health care professionals. Some are qualified to provide primary care, such as nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives and naturopathic physicians, among others. Others serve as members of multidisciplinary treatment teams in primary care settings. Without their contributions, many patients would lack essential health care services and options, especially those in rural communities and areas with primary care shortages.

An interesting case in point was a study published this week in *Health Affairs* on the safety of certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs). It found that they can safely provide care without doctors supervising them, and be more cost-effective. It's a strong argument for leaving aside old turf wars between professions and focusing on ways all health care professionals can meet patients' needs.

Coalition for Patients' Rights (CPR)

To read the article: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tom-silva/the-other-healthcare-cris_b_667922.html