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**Coalition for Patients' Rights Applauds IOM Report on
Addressing Nation's Health Care Needs**
*Recommendations by Institute of Medicine Include Elimination of
Scope of Practice Limitations*

WASHINGTON – In order to meet the health care needs of Americans, nurses who currently face restrictions to practicing to their full capabilities need to be fully utilized, according to a new report released by the Institute of Medicine (IOM). The "Future of Nursing" report reflects a core principle advocated by the Coalition for Patients' Rights™: patients should have the right to access services from a broad spectrum of health care professionals who provide safe, high-quality and cost effective health care.

The report examined the role of nurses within the American health care system, their responsibilities and education and how nurses, as the largest segment of health care professionals in the country, can help to provide quality, affordable and accessible care to patients.

Sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the report is a part of the Initiative on the Future of Nursing. Two key recommendations included were that nurses should be able to practice to the full extent of their education and training, and that they should be full partners with physicians and other health professionals in redesigning health care in the U.S.

The report also recognized that scope of practice limitations vary widely by state, meaning that in many places, nurse practitioners, as well as other health care professionals, are unable to perform the services they are educated and trained to provide.

"We have seen concerted efforts by medical groups to limit the range of services health care professionals can provide to patients," said Coalition spokesperson Lisa Summers, a certified nurse midwife with a doctorate in public health. "It is extremely encouraging that an institution as highly-regarded as the Institute of Medicine has made this call to government and health care organizations to remove unnecessary limitations and allow health care professionals to treat patients as we are licensed and educated to do."

The Future of Nursing committee recommends that regulations defining scope of practice for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) should be revised to conform to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing's (NCSBN) APRN Model Act/Rules and Regulations. The Model Act states that "APRNs are expected to practice as licensed independent practitioners within standards established and/or recognized by the [state nursing] board." Currently, some states' regulations differ from the NCSBN model because of state laws that were influenced by physician groups.

The committee also recommends that federal agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission and the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice should advise states with unduly restrictive regulations to allow APRNs to provide care to patients as they are fully qualified to do.

“As a member of the Coalition for Patients’ Rights, we see these recommendations from the IOM as a critical step in ensuring patient access to not only nurses, but a wide array of professionals who are not doctors of medicine or osteopathy who provide individualized and specialized care to patients,” said Summers. “Unnecessary regulations should not stand between patients and the qualified, licensed professionals who can help address their health concerns.”

Many patients across the United States lack the essential health care services they need, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. With the expansion of health insurance as a part of the health care law, it is expected that millions more will be eligible for care, increasing the demand for a broad spectrum of providers.

“It’s important to remember that patients benefit most when they receive coordinated care from a team of providers. Physicians aren’t the only professionals who can offer patients access to safe and affordable care,” continued Summers. “There is a broad spectrum of health care professionals, including nurses, psychologists, and physical and occupational therapists, among others, who will be critical in working together to improve patient access to care.”

To read the full IOM report, visit http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12956.

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About the Coalition for Patients’ Rights™

A national coalition of more than 35 organizations, the Coalition for Patients’ Rights represents more than three million licensed and certified health care professionals committed to ensuring comprehensive health care choices for all patients. It was formed in 2006 in response to divisive efforts by the Scope of Practice Partnership (SOPP), an alliance of medical and osteopathic physician organizations including the American Medical Association (AMA), which aims to limit the scopes of practice of other health care professionals.

The Coalition is comprised of a diverse array of health care professionals, including registered nurses, naturopathic doctors, psychologists, audiologists, physical and occupational therapists, advanced practice registered nurses (certified registered nurse anesthetists, nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives and clinical nurse specialists) and chiropractors.

For more information about the Coalition for Patients’ Rights, visit www.patientsrightscoalition.org.