



1235 E. Concord St.  
P.O. Box 536985  
Orlando, FL 32853-6985  
407-896-3261 • FAX 407-896-9042  
Email: [info@floridanurse.org](mailto:info@floridanurse.org)

ED BRIGGS, DNP, ARNP-C  
PRESIDENT

WILLA FULLER, RN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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## Full practice authority for ARNPs

The Florida Nurses Association supports legislation that would remove unnecessary physician supervision laws for advanced registered nurse practitioners (ARNPs). Lifting practice restrictions on ARNPs would allow them to serve the growing health care needs of our state, create innovative care delivery models, and save money.

ARNPs are educationally prepared (masters or doctorate level) to assume responsibility and accountability for health promotion and/or maintenance, as well as the assessment, diagnosis, and management of patient problems. This includes the use and prescription of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions (*American Nurses Association*). They deliver front-line primary and acute care and perform such services as diagnosing and treating common acute illnesses and injuries, providing immunizations, conducting physical exams, and managing high blood pressure, diabetes, and other chronic problems (*American Association of Colleges of Nursing*).

In Florida, an ARNP who wants to perform these functions in a private practice setting is required by law to have a protocol agreement with a supervising physician.

**It is time for policymakers to lift restrictions on ARNPs and allow them to serve the health care needs of our state.**

- **For years, physicians in Florida have utilized ARNPs in their private practices with no direct or onsite supervision of ARNPs.** In fact, physicians can own/manage up to five practices, so on any given day, a physician may be several miles away (they must be available by phone or other communication device). Removing supervisory requirements for ARNPs will not compromise patient safety. ARNPs would continue to consult with physician colleagues and make referrals as needed. Research has demonstrated that ARNPs and physicians have similar outcomes in various settings.
- The VA system already uses nurse practitioners as primary care providers to care for patients across all settings, both inpatient and outpatient.

- AARP recommends that “current state nurse practice acts and accompanying rules should be interpreted and/or amended where necessary to allow APRNs to fully and independently practice as defined by their education and certification (AARP, 2010). The policy change, according to AARP, ensures that its members and all healthcare consumers, especially in underserved settings in both urban and rural communities, have increased access to high quality care.
- Florida has the **most restrictive regulations** in the nation with regard to ARNPs; they cannot sign death certificates, initiate Baker Act proceedings, or order home health services. Nineteen states recognize ARNPs as autonomous primary care providers.
- Florida is the **only state** that does not allow nurse practitioners to obtain their DEA number that would authorize them to prescribe medically necessary medications that contain controlled substances.

By removing unnecessary and restrictive requirements on ARNPs, Florida can dramatically increase access to healthcare, foster an environment of healthcare innovation, and reduce expenditures (OPPAGA). Such action would act to reduce conflict between nursing and medicine and refocus priorities on healthcare delivery.