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The Consensus Model for APRN Regulation: A Consumer Guide

CAMPAIGN FOR APRN CONSENSUS

What is an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN)?

An APRN is a registered nurse who has obtained a license to practice in one of the four APRN roles:

i. Certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA);
ii. Certified nurse-midwife (CNM);
iii. Clinical nurse specialist (CNS); or
iv. Certified nurse practitioner (CNP).

APRNs have advanced education, knowledge and skills to care for a specific population of patients, including adults, families, children or neonates. APRNs can also provide gender specific health care (such as women's health) or provide psychiatric/mental health services. They are also educationally prepared to assess, diagnose and manage patient problems, which includes ordering tests and prescribing medications. APRNs work in a variety of settings, including hospitals, clinics and private offices. They can provide care in places where there is a shortage of physicians and health care is badly needed.

What is the Consensus Model for APRN Regulation?

The Consensus Model for APRN Regulation was introduced in 2008 to establish national standards for uniform regulation of APRNs in all states. The Consensus Model was developed by 48 APRN nursing organizations nationwide that have pledged support for these standards. These organizations need your help in getting the requirements passed in every state. The basic requirements for every APRN include the following:

- Graduate education for all nurses wishing to practice as an APRN;
- Certification by a national nursing certification body;
- Licensure by a state board of nursing;
- Regulation by a state board of nursing;
- Use of the APRN title followed by the specific role the APRN is authorized to practice (CNP, CNS, CRNA, or CNM); and
- National accreditation of all APRN programs by an accrediting organization that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and/or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

Why is the Consensus Model needed?

Currently, there are many inconsistencies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction in regard to laws and rules related to the regulation of APRNs. These variations include everything from the actual title used by an APRN to what medications he/she may prescribe. These inconsistencies lead to confusion for the public, as well as for other health care professionals. For example, if an APRN lives on a state border, he/she may be allowed to write a prescription for patients in State A in the morning, cross the border in the afternoon and be restricted from writing the very same prescription in State B. The laws that govern APRN practice significantly differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Adoption of the Consensus Model will ensure that health care consumers in all jurisdictions have access to comprehensive care by APRNs.

Adopting national standards increases patient safety by ensuring that all APRNs meet the same qualifications for practice. Standardization of the title for all APRNs increases the recognition of the profession and decreases consumer confusion.

How does this pertain to me?

- There is a growing shortage of health care providers. APRNs are qualified to provide much needed health care to people of all ages. Currently, barriers exist in many states that prevent APRNs from practicing to the full extent of their knowledge and skills. Adoption of the requirements in the Consensus Model will ensure that people of all jurisdictions have access to care that can be provided by an APRN.
- Laws regarding APRN titles, licensure and other requirements vary so much from jurisdiction to jurisdiction that the public and professionals alike are confused by jurisdictional differences. Adoption of the Consensus Model will bring uniformity to all jurisdictions.
- Establishing nationwide standards will increase patient safety by requiring all APRNs to meet the same educational and professional standards. All jurisdictions will be held to the same high standards for licensing APRNs.
- Agreement on the Consensus Model will allow APRNs to practice in other states, allowing them to travel to under served areas and improve access to care.

What can I do to help?

NCSBN is available to assist you in learning more about the Consensus Model for APRN Regulation. Visit our website at www.ncsbn.org. Find out what is going on in your state and tell your legislators that you support the Consensus Model for APRN Regulation.