

May 1, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Abbott:

Thank you very much for your ongoing support of everyone in Texas who is providing critical health care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Your efforts to reduce and streamline regulatory hurdles for providers such as Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) have been welcome and helpful for many APRNs who are seeking to contribute to the fight against the coronavirus.

There are more ways that APRNs can contribute, however, and their services will be in demand more than ever now that you have taken the welcome step of allowing medical offices to open. With many people delaying non-COVID-related care, there is likely to be an increase in patients needing help.

This is the very definition of an “all hands on deck” situation. Unfortunately, additional regulations are restricting the ability of APRNs to provide care as we enter this next phase.

While your emergency rules have waived the requirement of APRNs to have a *written* delegation agreement with a physician, APRNs are still required to *obtain* a delegation agreement with a Texas licensed physician, even if this agreement is not in writing. These agreements can be difficult and expensive to obtain under the best of circumstances, but the stress added to the medical system during this period of crisis has made it far more challenging.

Many physicians are finding it impossible to enter into these agreements even if they want to, due to limitations related to employer policies, malpractice insurance, or constraints placed upon them due to the crisis itself. This means that many APRNs – whether already here in Texas or coming from other states to volunteer to help – are unable to find a delegating physician and, thus, people’s access to care is still delayed.

As Texas begins to reopen for business and simultaneously expands testing capabilities across the state, we must ensure that our health care providers can fully meet our state’s health care needs. During this challenging time, APRNs have played and will continue to play a pivotal role in efficiently treating COVID patients while also addressing the ongoing health care needs of Texans.

Waiving the delegation agreement entirely would mean more APRNs doing more to help Texas get back on its feet.

Further, during the 87<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session we encourage the Texas Legislature to take a look at removing these antiquated and unnecessary delegation agreements so we can better serve the health care needs of Texans not just during disasters, but all the time.

This simple, common-sense change to the law would help Texans' overall health and well-being and would do so without requiring any additional state funding.

Already, nearly half of the United States, as well as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and all branches of the military, have permanently reduced this bureaucratic mandate. Decades' worth of peer-reviewed studies have found that APRNs improve access to health care and have similar or better results for the conditions they treat when compared to physicians.

Additionally, our organizations stand ready to support any interim work to fully review how Texas can eliminate regulatory red tape in an effort to expand health care access.

Thank you again for all you are doing to keep Texas as healthy, safe, and prosperous as possible in these difficult times.

Respectfully,

AARP - Texas  
Americans for Prosperity - Texas  
APRN Alliance  
Center for Public Policy Priorities  
Consortium of Texas Certified Nurse Midwives  
LeadingAge Texas  
Methodist Healthcare Ministries  
Texas Association of Business  
Texas Business Leadership Council  
Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute  
Texas Clinical Nurse Specialists  
Texas Impact  
Texas Nurses Association  
Texas Nurse Practitioners  
Texas Silver Haired Legislature  
University Health System

