



## Increasing Access to High Quality Care for America's Veterans

### **Advanced Practice Registered Nurses: A Proven Solution**

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), which include nurse practitioners, certified registered nurse-midwives, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and clinical nurse specialists, receive extensive education and clinical training in their specific healthcare fields. They are required to pass rigorous national certification board exams to demonstrate their expertise, knowledge, and competency. APRNs bring a unique, comprehensive perspective of patient care and are highly skilled collaborators in the delivery of team-based care.

In 2010, the Institute of Medicine issued a landmark report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* that called for APRNs to practice to the full extent of their education and training.<sup>1</sup> A number of other national policy bodies support the role of APRNs as full practice providers, including AARP<sup>2</sup> and the Federal Trade Commission.<sup>3</sup> In 2014, current federal policies do not fully support these recommendations. As the nation considers ways to create a more efficient healthcare delivery system that focuses on improved patient outcomes, increased access, and decreased costs, the following recommendation from the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) would help ensure this goal.

### **Answering the Call for Providers to Care for America's Veterans**

The VHA has engaged in significant review of the current evidence documenting the contributions APRNs make to the healthcare system and has proposed to update their Nursing Handbook to recognize APRNs as Full Practice Providers (FPPs). If this modernization were to occur, the nation's VHA healthcare facilities would allow 3,600 nationally licensed and board certified APRNs<sup>4</sup> to practice to the full extent of their education and skill. This update would ensure America's service men and women have increased access to a full range of providers. Decreasing patient backlogs though this change would take place in a healthcare environment that is patient-centered and team-based.



Veterans have earned the right to seamless and timely continuity of care. The role APRNs have in increasing access to safe care, decreasing cost, and strengthening care coordination is a value that would be further enhanced by adopting the VHA's proposal to recognize APRNs as FPPs.

**Request: Contact the VA to express support for the modernization of the VHA Nursing Handbook recognizing APRNs to their full scope, and urge the agency to finalize and implement it. Do not support efforts that oppose modernization of the VHA Nursing Handbook.**

For more information, contact Frank Purcell, Senior Director of Federal Government Affairs ([fpurcell@aanadc.com](mailto:fpurcell@aanadc.com)) or Ralph Kohl Associate Director of Government Affairs ([rkohl@aanadc.com](mailto:rkohl@aanadc.com)) at the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists.

<sup>1</sup> The Institute of Medicine (2011). *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*. The National Academies Press. Washington, DC.

<sup>2</sup> AARP Public Policy Institute. *Removing Barriers to Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Care: Hospital Privileges, Insight on the Issues* (Washington, DC: AARP, September 2011)

<sup>3</sup> Federal Trade Commission (2014, March). *Policy Perspectives: Competition and the Regulation of Advanced Practice Nurses*. Retrieved from <http://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/reports/policy-perspectives-competition-regulation-advanced-practice-nurses/140307aprnpolicypaper.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs. (n.d.) *Hospitals and Clinics*. Retrieved from <http://www.2.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp>.