

## Legislation Introduced in Pennsylvania to Provide Nurse Practitioners Full Practice Authority

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Pennsylvania State Senator, Camera Bartolotta, recently re-introduced legislation seeking to modernize Pennsylvania's Professional Nursing Law to allow qualified Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) to practice in their field of specialty independent of a physician after they complete a three-year, 3,600 hour collaboration agreement with a physician. Currently, 22 states, as well as Washington, D.C., have already adopted full practice authority for APRNs; Pennsylvania still requires these healthcare providers to practice under a collaborative agreement with a physician at all times.

According to Senator Bartolotta, APRNs are perfectly suited to help meet the growing demand for health care services, as studies have shown patients who are treated by APRNs have similar health outcomes to patients whose care is provided by physicians. She further argued that allowing APRNs to help patients to the fullest extent of their knowledge and training via full practice authority would provide nurse practitioners the ability to help fill a void and address "a crisis in terms of availability of quality health care services" in rural communities based on physician retirement and a lack of physicians coming into those areas.

The Senate approved similar legislation almost a year ago, but the bill did not receive a vote in the House of Representatives. According to Senator Bartolotta, several statewide and national advocacy organizations have voiced their support for full practice authority for nurse practitioners, including the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania, the National Academy of Medicine, AARP, the National Governors' Association and the Pennsylvania Organization of Nurse Leaders. The ongoing evolution of how healthcare is provided in Pennsylvania is undoubtedly an important issue which deserves our personal, professional and communities' attention.

The bill, Senate Bill 25, has been referred to the Senate Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure. Information about the Committee members and the proposed legislation can be found on the Pennsylvania General Assembly website.

For further information on this matter, please contact Debra Weinrich (215.864.6260; [weinrichd@whiteandwilliams.com](mailto:weinrichd@whiteandwilliams.com)).

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