

Esteemed Vermont State Representative,

I am writing to you in regards to HB 684: REMOVE the state's requirement that APRNs (CRNAs, CNPs, CNMs) practice in a collaborative agreement with a physician for at least 24 months and 2,400 hours, or at least 12 months and 1,600 hours for new roles or population foci.

As a private practice board-certified internal medicine physician and married to a private practice board-certified psychiatrist, I have very grave concerns for the citizens of Vermont on the approval of this bill to enter the full Vermont state house for a vote.

Nurse practitioners HAVE NOT and WILL NOT have the rigorous medical training involving 4 years of post baccalaureate medical school training and 3-4 more years of residency training in addition to any post residency fellowship training encompassing over 20,000 hours of supervised training. Many in the lay public likely don't even know the difference in education between a physician and a nurse practitioner with nurse practitioners training in the practice and theory of nursing and not medicine. Many online diploma mills abound with 100% acceptance rates, ADN to MSN or ADN to DNP in some as little as 18-24 months and some requiring as little as 700 hours of clinical time! Nurse practitioners may have a role in the medical field, and having proper supervision by a residency-trained, MEDICAL board certified physician is important and tantamount to protecting the health of our citizens.

Many do not know that physician residency slots are capped by Congress and have not been adjusted since 1997, so while medical schools have expanded their class sizes, the number of residency slots remain stagnant. Meanwhile, the explosion of online nurse practitioner programs have also exacerbated the nursing shortage with many desiring to pursue this degree plan rather than stay at the bedside. Plus, residency programs for nurse practitioners are popping up with many nurse practitioners choosing not to work in rural areas (as they were original intended) but stay in urban areas and working fields such as dermatology, IV hydration, and boutique arrangements. Plus, nurse practitioners can one day work in family practice and then jump to dermatology or pediatrics without any prior training. A physician who wishes to do so MUST complete a residency training program lasting at the minimum 3 years. I work in an acute tertiary hospital in a major city, and I see the rapid turnover of nurses with many pursuing online studies while also working FULL TIME!

My wife and I have personally witnessed inappropriate diagnoses and treatments by unsupervised nurse practitioners with the potential of harming patients. The training of nurse practitioners pale in comparison to that of physicians, but the raising trend for permitting nurse practitioners to work independently without adequate physician supervision is worrisome to the public who may not know the qualifications of the prescribing nurse practitioners nor see the lack of physician supervision.

Would you feel comfortable boarding as a passenger on a commercial airplane if you knew the pilot did not complete formal pilot flight school and instead has some experience around aircraft and is "supervised" from afar by ground-based controllers? Would that pilot be experienced or knowledgeable enough to know what to do in the worst-case scenarios or identify impending flight problems? I can tell you that I wouldn't board that aircraft!

Formal medical training is imperative to understand the interaction of body systems, physiologic effects of drugs, and potential side effects that these allopathic medications may have. I will reiterate that the public's health is at stake, and providing a pathway for the unsupervised practice of medicine will affect the well-

being of your citizens. I may watch with worried interest from afar in Texas, but I am concerned about the well-being of fellow Vermont citizens.

I strongly urge you to consider the significant public health implications of this bill. A NO vote is a vote for the health of Vermont. While this vote may not alleviate the physician shortage, it will protect the public from unknowingly being harmed.

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