

To: House Committee on Government Operations

From: Michelle Wade MSN/Ed, APRN, AGNP - C

Vermont Nurse Practitioner Association, Member

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Date: February 2, 2018

Re: Office of Professional Regulation (OPR)H. 684 - An act relating to professions and occupations regulated by the Office of Professional Regulation, Subchapter 2. Advanced Practice Registered Nurses

Good Morning Chair Townshend and members of the House Government Operations Committee. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with the committee about H.684. For the record, my name is Michelle Wade and I am an Advanced Practiced Registered Nurse (APRN). I am a member of the dedicated full time in house provider staff at Rutland Health and Rehabilitation, a Genesis facility, providing primary and urgent care for residents, and a Hospitalist at Gifford Medical Center.

I am testifying today on behalf of the Vermont Nurse Practitioners Association (VNPA). The mission on VNPA is to promote the value and support the effort of Vermont Nurse Practitioners in providing accessible, high quality health care and to engage Nurse Practitioners to actively participate in health policy and policy making.

VNPA strongly supports subchapter two of H.684, which removes the transition to practice requirements imposed on recent graduates and APRNs who are changing practices.

Vermont is one of 22 states that has granted full practice authority to Nurse Practitioners, which allows for improved access to care. Since the Vermont legislature granted full practice authority to Nurse Practitioners seven years ago, Vermont Nurse Practitioners have been doing just that, providing quality care to Vermonters. Nurse practitioners are graduates of accredited programs, have successfully passed national certification exams, and met state licensure requirements and standards. These licensure requirements, expectations, and standards apply to all licensees regardless of setting or time since licensure.

A growing body of research indicates that the quality of APRN care in states that do not have transition to practice agreement requirements is comparable to the care delivered in states that do. These agreements simply act as a barrier to care. Susanne Phillips, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, clinical professor at the University of California, Irvine, tracks state legislation related to APRN practice and publishes an annual update in *The Nurse Practitioner*. She notes that states granting full practice authority with no transition to practice to newly licensed and certified APRNs do not experience quality and safety problems or inferior patient outcomes.

A 2010 report from the Institute of Medicine titled “The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health” called for the removal of practice barriers – non-evidence based laws, regulations, and policies – that prevent advance practice registered nurses from providing the full scope of health care and services they are educated and certified to provide.

Eliminating the Transition to practice agreement requirement aligns with this recommendation and is another step our state could take to encourage the work of APRNs, while continuing to provide access to high quality affordable care.

Collaboration is a natural part of our practice, and our education is based on passing competency exams, which include principals of collaborative practice. This is the backbone of NP education and the focus of our practice. Communication, collaboration and referrals occur between clinicians based on clinical judgement, and because all health professionals are bound by professional codes of conduct to serve their patients’ needs, not because of transition to practice agreement

Every acute inpatient and outpatient care practice collects quality and outcome data, which is submitted under our federal regulatory requirements. This data is utilized by commercial and public insurance entities and consistently shows that there is no evidence of concerning trends regarding APRN practice in states without transition to practice regulation.

My ask to you is to remove the transition to practice agreement for Nurse Practitioners in the state of Vermont. Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.