

March 27, 2018

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations:

I am writing to express concern about H.684, an act relating to the professions and occupations regulated by the Office of Professional Regulation, as passed by the House.

As an autonomously practicing Nurse Anesthetist in Vermont, I fear the language concerning Collaborative Practice Agreements for APRNs will be open to broad interpretation. This may be used as justification for a supervision requirement of new graduate APRNs now, and for all APRNs in the future, resulting in reduced access to care for my fellow Vermonters.

H. 684, as passed by the House, has the significant possibility of decreasing a rural hospital's ability to provide 24/7 anesthesia services. These anesthesia services are required for surgery, labor epidurals, and the numerous other procedures that we, Nurse Anesthetists, provide to Vermonters. Please put a stop to this attack on Vermonters' access to care.

As the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists notes, Nurse Anesthetists are rural America's primary anesthesia professional. Our role will only increase with time, as it has been demonstrated over and over again that Nurse Anesthetists provide anesthesia services at a level of quality that meets, and often exceeds, that of Physician Anesthesiologists at a fraction of the cost. This is born out by the numerous surgeons in Vermont, not to mention the United States, who allow their patients to receive anesthesia services from fully autonomous and independently practicing Nurse Anesthetists.

This unwarranted assault on APRNs, specifically Nurse Anesthetists, from the Vermont Medical Society and Vermont Society of Anesthesiologists, stems from a fear based attempt to limit healthy competition in the healthcare arena. As the Federal Trade Commission notes in *Policy Perspectives: Competition and the Regulation of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses*, "Competition in health care benefits consumers by helping to control costs and prices, improve quality of care, ...and expand access to health care services and goods".

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The removal of the Practice Guidelines and Collaborative Practice Agreements, as submitted in the original bill, confirms APRNs as the valuable providers of healthcare that we are. This will serve to ensure Vermonters have the unhindered access to high quality care they deserve.

Please take the time to fully consider the impact H. 684, as passed by the House, will have on Vermonters. As a Vermonter, I ask you to accept the language as originally submitted by the Office of Professional Regulation to ensure access to care for all Vermonters is preserved.

I am happy to discuss this important issue with you further and answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

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