

Dear Senators,

Thank you so very much for the opportunity to testify today. Please see the attached testimony for the proposed amendments to H.289.

I felt that I did not convey my thoughts very succinctly when testifying today, so I would like to summarize my testimony here.

Statutory Language Changes

Outdated language regarding health care providers is used throughout the Vermont statutes. Oftentimes, statutes use the words “physician” or “doctor” when, in fact, other types of health care providers acting within their scopes of practice, including NDs, APRNs, and others, are permitted to perform responsibilities included in the statutes (but are excluded in statute due to the statutes being outdated).

In 2012, this committee added language to the OPR bill in Act 116 that directed Legislative Council to prepare a catalog of the use of the words “physician” and “doctor” in the Vermont statutes and to deliver the catalog to the general assembly later that year. Since that time, we have been working with our colleagues in various health care professions to determine how to best amend the statutes.

We are not asking for the word “physician” in statute to apply to NDs. We simply want to look at the statutes so that some of provisions can be modernized to include other types of health care providers.

Give the length of time that has passed since 2012, we are requesting that this committee add similar language in H.289 bill to update the catalog. In H.289, ***we are not asking for any language changes*** – we are asking that this committee do the same as you did in 2012 and ask Legislative Council to ***prepare a catalog of statutes***.

Signing of Birth and Death Certificates

For years, NDs have been able to sign birth and death certificates. As primary care providers, our patients expect that we will be able to carry out the duties of a primary care provider, and that includes signing birth and death certificates. A provision in our licensing statutes, 26 V.S.A. § 4124, presumes our ability to do so:

We have not heard of any problems with NDs signing birth certificates; There were, however, at least 4 instances this past year where NDs were denied the right to sign a death certificate. This was heartbreaking for the families that specifically wanted their health care provider to be the one to be there with them and sign the certificate.

The attached testimony lays out the provisions in statute that we believe need to be amended so that NDs can continue to sign both birth and death certificates.

Thank you for considering our requests.

Joshua Green

President, VANP