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January 22, 2026

To: Hon. Virginia Lyons, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Welfare

From: Jennifer Colin, Director, Office of Professional Regulation
Shiela Boni, Nursing Executive Officer, Office of Professional Regulation

Re: S.163, An act relating to the role of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses in hospital care

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the draft legislation S.163 related to hospital licensure and to hospital patients' rights to specify that an advanced practice registered nurse may be the health care professional responsible for a hospital patient's care.

The mission of the Office of Professional Regulation is to protect the public from incompetent or unethical practitioners through a system of licensure. We achieve this by supporting boards and advisor groups that oversee licensure of 50 professions and approximately 80,000 licensees. OPR and the Board of Nursing are committed to partnering with our legislative colleagues to reduce barriers to licensure and to support Vermont nurses to practice to the top of their licensure without imposing conflicting regulatory requirements or restrictions to authorized practice.

Before action is taken on the proposed changes to 18 V.S.A. § 1851, we are appreciative of the opportunity to support the bill and share one concern we have identified with a proposed revision to the current language of S.163.

Background

Vermont is one of 27 jurisdictions in the US that provide full practice authority to APRNs once they have met qualifications for licensure. Vermont law does not require supervision of APRN practice by a physician or other provider. Full practice authority, as established in Part 9-17 (b) & (c) of the Vermont Nursing Administrative Rules, authorizes APRNs in Vermont to be primary care providers of record, conduct acts of medical diagnosis including ordering, and interpreting diagnostic tests and procedures, prescribe medications and medical, therapeutic, or corrective measures, initiate written or verbal orders to other health care providers, and manage and evaluate care.

Concern

The current proposed language requiring “physician consultation and support at all times” conflicts with and is more restrictive than the established Nursing Statutes and Rules. OPR does not support having standards for APRNs based on the location of their work. Without understanding the intent for the inclusion of this language, OPR is concerned that this change does not reflect current law and takes Vermont APRNs’ scope of practice a step back. APRN practice requirements are established in Nursing Statute 26 V.S.A. § 1572(4) and Part 9-17 (b) & (c) of the Vermont Nursing Administrative Rules.

Recommendation

OPR respectfully requests the committee’s consideration of striking the proposed sentence on page 2, lines 13 - 15, “Physician consultation and support shall be available to an attending APRN at all times in accordance with applicable standards of practice and regulatory requirements.” Removing this language will keep S.163 consistent with APRN scope of practice as established in Vermont law.