



Ohio Chapter

May 14th, 2019

Judith Romano, MD, FAAP

Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and Members of the House Health committee—

On behalf of the nearly 3,000 members of the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding House Bill 177. This legislation seeks to remove the requirement that nurse practitioners in Ohio have a standard care arrangement in place with a physician. As a pediatrician practicing in rural Ohio, I understand the access challenges that underserved communities face; however, HB 177 is not the right solution to this problem.

I began my career as a Registered Nurse and expanded my education to become an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse. Of note, I practiced as an Independent Nurse Practitioner in the state of West Virginia. After 10 years in the field, I furthered my education and graduated from medical school, followed by a residency in Pediatrics: that represents 8 more years of education. I now practice in Belmont County where Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (PNP) are an integral part of our team caring for patients and their families. In fact, our practice was the first in our area to include this role and has been a continuous service for 23 years, increasing access to care in this Appalachian region.

As a former APRN who practiced independently, I believe that I am in a unique position to weigh the pro's and con's of independent practice for APRN's. The original role of nurse practitioner arose in Pediatrics in the 1970's and was originally developed as a collaborative model. Some states have adopted forms of an independent practice model, however even proponents of independent practice understand the benefits of collaboration. The simple truth is advocates for eliminating the standard care arrangement have not effectively demonstrated the benefits of abandoning a collaborative model, which is Ohio's current model.

With about half of the medical training a physician receives before practicing, APRN's provide valuable assistance to the health care team, but certainly should be one part of a team that includes a physician to provide comprehensive care to the patients. While I have great respect for my nursing colleagues and acknowledge many areas for which they are well prepared to practice without a collaborative agreement such as education, administration, health consultation, and case management, the medical care management of patients needs to remain with a medical doctor.

The proposed legislation would fracture the team approach even as health care continues to be more and more complex. This legislation is intended to improve access to care and, as a former nurse, I know nurses are an important part of that care. But, my fear is that the care provided would be a disservice to patients because it will only be a portion of the comprehensive care they need. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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