



To: Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
From: Candy Rinehart, President, OAAPN
Date: October 4, 2017
Re: HB 111 Proponent Testimony

Thank you Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on HB 111.

My name is Candy Rinehart and I am a family nurse practitioner. As the President of the Ohio Association of Advanced Practice Nurses, an organization committed to the principles of patient safety, quality and cost efficiencies, I urge you to hear why signature authority for Psychiatric Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) for emergency psychiatric evaluation requests is essential to the Ohio citizens that we serve.

House Bill 111 was drafted in response to the concern that our people receive mental health services in a safe, timely and competent manner. In Ohio, when individuals demonstrate or disclose that they are at considerable risk of causing harm to themselves or to others, a trained individual may complete a “pink slip”, which is an application for an emergency mental health evaluation. Under current law, this “pink slip” form, which simply requires that the individual be further assessed by a psychiatric professional, may be completed by any one of the following: a psychiatrist, a licensed clinical psychologist, a health officer, which is frequently a public health nurse, a police officer, a sheriff or deputy sheriff, a parole officer, or a licensed physician.

HB 111 mirrors HB 217 from the last General Assembly; a bill introduced by Representative Ruhl and passed unanimously by the House. Due to the brief time period in the lame duck session, the bill did not get to the Senate floor.

Passage of House Bill 111 will grant specially trained Psychiatric APRNs, who are licensed and certified as mental health care specialists, the signature authority to activate the mental health safety net without relying on a physician, or a police officer, to complete the “pink slip” form.

Currently, there are approximately 700 psychiatric mental health APRNs who are providing mental health services for patients in both public and private mental health practices throughout Ohio. In many of these practices they are the mental health provider of record and are responsible for more than 60-70% of all of the psychiatric mental health services provided including psychotherapy and medication management. Psychiatric APRNs have the requisite education of a masters or doctoral prepared APRN, the required national certification and the experience to diagnose and treat mental illness. Due to their specialized education and training it makes sense to afford this group of APRNs the authority to have at risk individuals safely and quickly evaluated.

Ohio is in a state of mental health emergency! Pink slip authority for Psychiatric APRNs is one of many solutions that need to be initiated quickly to positively impact this growing crisis. We would like to thank Representative Carfagna and Representative Ryan for requesting the expedited passage of HB 111.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer your questions.

Sincerely,

Candy Rinehart, DNP APRN – CNP FAANP
President