



To: Senate Health Committee  
From: Summer Davis, Ohio Association of Advanced Practice Nurses  
Date: April 24, 2024

RE: OAAPN Senate Bill 196 Proponent Testimony

Chair Huffman, Vice-Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, my name is Summer Davis and I am here today on behalf of the Ohio Association of Advanced Practice Nurses (OAAPN) to express our strong support for Senate Bill 196, which addresses the lack of authority of advanced practice nurses to sign certain forms and authorizes global signature authority within scope of practice. This bill is a collaborative effort between the OAAPN and the Ohio State Medical Association.

Senate Bill 196 seeks to empower advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), including certified nurse practitioners (NPs) and certified nurse-midwives, by allowing them to sign or complete forms related to patient care within their scope of practice. Each role delineates a specific scope of practice informed by rigorous educational preparation and training. This specialization enables APRNs to contribute to health care in unique and invaluable ways, tailored to the demands of their respective roles.

APRNs possess the requisite education, expertise, and experience to deliver both basic and comprehensive health care services effectively. They represent a readily available workforce strategically positioned to enhance healthcare accessibility, address health disparities, and mitigate the costs associated with care provision.

Despite APRNs being fully trained and capable to diagnose and treat patients, the current inability for them to sign certain patient care documents poses a significant challenge to the delivery of care. APRNs often manage the patient's condition comprehensively, providing the necessary care and overseeing treatment plans. However, the lack of recognition of APRN signatures creates unnecessary hurdles in the patient care process. This discrepancy not only undermines the efficiency of care delivery but also introduces potential delays and disruptions in patient management. As APRNs play a vital role in the healthcare landscape, it is imperative to address this issue to ensure seamless and efficient patient care.

To address these challenges and improve care delivery efficiency, OAAPN has collaborated with Senator Roegner to introduce Senate Bill 196. This legislation aims to ensure that APRN signatures are recognized, aligning with the practices of sixteen states and the District of Columbia that have already embraced broad-based "global" signature authority laws.

Global signature authority for APRNs brings significant efficiencies to provider care and hospital administration. By allowing APRNs to sign or complete forms related to patient care within their scope of practice, this legislation streamlines administrative processes and enhances patient care delivery.

First, with APRNs empowered to sign forms documenting patient care, there is a reduction in bureaucratic delays. Patients no longer have to wait for multiple providers to sign their care forms, leading to quicker access to essential services such as disabled parking placards, health status documentation, sports physicals, and emergency services.



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Secondly, the implementation of global signature authority promotes transparency and accountability in the patient-provider relationship documentation. With APRNs able to complete necessary paperwork during the same visit as care delivery, there is a clearer and more immediate documentation trail, ensuring accurate records and reducing the risk of errors or misunderstandings.

Moreover, this legislation optimized the healthcare workforce by eliminating unnecessary duplication of services. By authorizing APRNs to independently manage patient care documentation, resources can be allocated more efficiently within healthcare facilities. This allows other healthcare professionals to focus on tasks that require their specialized expertise, ultimately improving overall patient outcomes.

Furthermore, the efficiencies brought by signature authority extend to hospital administration. With streamlined paperwork processes, administrative staff can devote more time and resources to other critical tasks, such as patient scheduling, billing, and resource allocation. This leads to improved operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness within healthcare institutions.

Examples of crucial areas where APRN signature recognition is impactful include certification of disability for disabled parking placards, sports physicals for student athletes, pre-employment and health screening exams, vital statistics documents, workers' compensation forms for job-related injuries, and providing proof of a patient's health need for emergency utilities.

It's important to recognize that APRNs are trained to independently manage both acute and chronic healthcare needs of patients. The outdated language in policy often interferes with access to care for patients because statutes exclude the title of APRNs, despite the condition being treated and managed by an APRN. This not only creates delays in care but also lacks transparency to patients and payors, and creates inefficiencies in documentation trails.

In conclusion, global signature authority, as proposed in Senate Bill 196, will reduce the regulatory burden on care by removing the unnecessary duplication of services and delays in care. We urge you to support this bill for the betterment of patient care in Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB196, I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Summer Davis, MSN, FNP-BC, APRN, CNP