

Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner Care

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Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act

by Cynthia Downs

The Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act of 2008, H.R. 6826, is a bill introduced into U.S. Congress that would change Medicare law to grant Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, Clinical Nurse Specialists, and Certified Nurse Midwives the ability to order and certify home health care services. Currently, Medicare regulation allows only physicians to initiate or certify home health orders. This bill was sponsored by Representative Allyson Schwartz (D-PA) and needs more co-sponsors. Please write your state representative in Congress to ask for their support and co-sponsor this important bill. A form letter that can be e-mailed or mailed and more information about the bill can be obtained through the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners' website at www.aanp.org.

Important Information to Ensure Continuity of Payment

The Department of Social and Health Services is implementing a new Medicaid payment system (ProviderOne). To ensure continued payment while this system is being implemented the key step is the registration activity. Many providers use clearinghouses to process payments and will need the clearinghouse new ProviderOne ID to complete their own registration.

Many clearinghouses have begun setting up security so they can complete the registration process. To determine if your clearinghouse is making progress on registration visit <http://maa.dshs.wa.gov/dshshipaa> to review a list of clearinghouses that have been active with DSHS in the past year, their new ProviderOne ID number, and a status of their registration activity. If your clearinghouse is not on this list it is vital to "check in" with them to stress the importance of registration to continue payments.

Providers who bill on their own behalf will have an opportunity to complete their registration soon.

Anyone interested in updates on registration and other ProviderOne implementation activities including training can join at:

http://listserv.wa.gov/archives/providerone_provider_readiness.html

For additional information about ProviderOne visit: <http://maa.dshs.wa.gov/ProviderOne>

ARNP Reimbursement Rate Inequality 'The Same Pay For The Same Service'

In 2002 a Washington State advanced registered nurse practitioner (ARNP) filed a complaint with the Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) after identifying that the Regence Blue Shield reimbursement policy for ARNPs might be violating the state's Health Care Services Contract Act (RCW 48.44.290). Regence arbitrarily set ARNP reimbursement at 95% of the physician rate for performing the same service. An initial ruling from the OIC found Regence in violation of state law. Regence appealed the decision in 2003. The OIC sided with Regence and refused to require a change to its reimbursement policy.

The Washington State Nurses Association (WSNA) challenged the OIC decision in 2004. The OIC ruled that the law did not address contracts between providers and insurers and avoided ruling on the issue of whether a reimbursement rate that was an arbitrary percentage of the physician reimbursement rate was legal.

In 2005 WSNA brought the issue to the King County Superior Court but lost. The court ruled that the term "health care service contract" used in the law referred to contracts between the health plan and the insured individual and did not extend to the health care provider. The ruling suggested that the law was not violated unless there was complete denial of coverage and that the law did not have legal force in addressing reimbursement parity for ARNPs because it did not affect the agreement between the health plan and the provider.

This loophole in the current law has allowed Re-gence to reimburse ARNPs at a rate lower than that of physicians for the same service. In addition, the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries reimburses ARNPs at 90% of the physi-cian fee schedule.

The current law negatively impacts access to care for many people because ARNPs may be less will-ing to accept patients with health plans that offer reduced rates of reimbursement. There are over 4,600 ARNPs licensed in Washington State. ARNPs include certified nurse midwives who pro-vide obstetric care; nurse anesthetists who provide anesthesia care and nurse practitioners and psy-chiatric clinical nurse specialists who provide both primary and specialty care. ARNPs work in urban and rural areas and care for underserved and vul-nerable populations. According to a University of Washington study, ARNPs provide 12% of primary care in rural areas of the state.

When a health plan reduces reimbursement to an ARNP the patient is billed the same amount and receives no reduction in premium or co-pay. The reduced ARNP reimbursement benefits the health plan while reducing access to care for patients.

The proposed legislation would require health plans and state agencies to provide the same rate of reimbursement for ARNPs as physicians receive when the same service is provided. This would be based on the use of national, standardized billing codes.

Rationale Payment equal to that of a physician for a service provided by an ARNP is an access to care issue and an issue of equality and non-discrimination. When an ARNP makes a decision about which patients to accept into the practice based on the rate of reimbursement this can re-duce access to care. Health plans that reimburse at 100% of the physician rate provide a more stable financial base for ARNP practice and access to care than health plans that arbitrarily reduce reim-bursement to ARNPs. Given the shortage of pri-mary care providers in Washington, this law will increase access to care for many people while ad-dressing a loophole in the current law that unfairly discriminates against ARNPs.

The Value of Membership

by Therese Vafaezadeh

As you know, AUWS takes pride in representing both specialty and primary care nurse practitio-ners, whose numbers now top 4000 in WA state. Through the work of the volunteer NPs who make up our legislative committee and Board of Direc-tors, the bare-bones paid staff at NP Central, and our paid lobbyists, we have successfully advocated for ARNP practice for many years. Since 1997, AUWS has initiated legislation and lobbied the state legislature on multiple issues, and has achieved success in, for example, obtaining full prescriptive authority without a joint practice agreement and securing Labor and Industries “attending provider” status. AUWS always strives to protect and expand ARNP scope of practice while improving and increasing access to quality health care for our patients.

How are we so successful? Membership dues directly support our lobbyist. The reality is that without a lobbyist, we are unable to effect change in Olympia. In addition, your voice and participation as members are essential to ensure accurate and robust representation.

At this time, although we have over 4000 ARNPs in the state, less than 10% are AUWS members. Why is this number so low? Imagine how much more successful we could be if we had a more inclusive membership! We encourage you to join for many reasons: Help us continue to cover lobbyist costs. Connect with other ARNPs and stay informed of current NP practice issues. Imagine an ARNP public relations marketing campaign, funded by AUWS. There is so much we can do! Above all, we encourage you to become a member because your participation is a sound investment in safeguarding and advancing ARNP care and our profession.

If you already belong to AUWS, we thank you for your continued membership. Think about encouraging your co-workers to join. Imagine how powerful our voice would be if all 4000 ARNPs in Washington State belonged to AUWS.

Articles Wanted

ARNP Care would welcome reader submissions for articles. Articles can be on any topic relevant to

ARNPs and should be 800 words or less in length. Submissions should be sent as a MS Word .doc file or as a text file. Send your articles or queries to care@nurse.net.

Join the Nurse Practitioner Directory?

The Washington State Nurse Practitioner directory at www.auws.org can help us to link together as professionals and provide a means to refer patients to other nurse practitioners. But it will only work if we have nurse practitioners who are willing to sign-up to be listed in the NP Directory. In a world where the information age has truly arrived our tremendous efforts as Health Care Providers may go unnoticed if we don't give consumers a way to find us.

Classified Ads

Tacoma, WA - Full and Part-time FNP

MultiCare Express, a part of MultiCare Health System, is a retail based practice located in area pharmacies. The express clinic will offer high quality care for simple illnesses such as sore throats, URI, UTI, sinusitis with point of care testing and some common immunizations. This is a great opportunity to practice autonomously in a unique setting. Master of Science degree in nursing and national certification as a Family Nurse Practitioner is required. MultiCare Health System offers competitive compensation/benefits as well as flexible full-time and part-time schedules. For more information please contact Provider Services @ 800-621-0301 or send CV to blazenewtrails@multicare.org.

Please reference opportunity #643-798-800

Tacoma, WA - ARNP or PA-C

Tacoma Family Medicine (TFM) seeks a full-time nurse practitioner or physician assistant to work in a collaborative practice providing comprehensive primary healthcare in all aspects of family practice. TFM is a fully accredited Family Medicine Residency Program and a proud member of the University of Washington's Family Practice Network. Candidate must be eligible for licensure and certification in Washington State. Excellent compensation, benefits, and group stability makes this an ideal choice for the provider who is looking to experience the best of Northwest living; from big city amenities to the pristine beauty and recreational opportunities of the great outdoors. For more information regarding this fantastic opportunity, contact Provider Services @ 800.621.0301 or send your CV to blazenewtrails@multicare.org. Please reference opportunity #723-889

Puyallup, WA - Orthopedic ARNP

Good Samaritan Hospital, part of MultiCare Health System, seeks ARNP to join a growing orthopedic and sports medicine group in an office based practice with potential for first assist surgical opportunities. Competitive salary, a full array of benefits and a great location makes this an ideal choice for the provider who is looking to experience the best of Northwest living; from big city amenities to the pristine beauty and recreational opportunities of the great outdoors. For more information, contact Provider Services @ 800.621.0301 or send CV to blazenewtrails@multicare.org. Refer to opportunity #739-894/895. "MultiCare Health System is a drug free workplace"

Tacoma, WA - ARNP - Adult Medicine

Family Practice/Geriatician seeks an Adult Nurse Practitioner to

work in a collaborative practice providing comprehensive primary healthcare in all aspects of family practice, geriatrics and nursing home care. The provider will work two days in the clinic and two days rounding in the nursing homes. Candidates must be eligible for licensure & certification in Washington State. Excellent compensation, benefits, and group stability makes this an ideal choice for the provider who is looking to experience the best of Northwest living; from big city amenities to the pristine beauty and recreational opportunities of the great outdoors. For more information regarding this fantastic opportunity, contact Provider Services @ 800.621.0301 or send your CV to blazenewtrails@multicare.org. Please reference opportunity #714-881

Tacoma, WA - Full and Part-time Retail Clinic FNP

MultiCare Express, a part of MultiCare Health System, is a retail based practice located in area pharmacies. The express clinic will offer high quality care for simple illnesses such as sore throats, URI, UTI, sinusitis with point of care testing and some common immunizations. This is a great opportunity to practice autonomously in a unique setting. Master of Science degree in nursing and national certification as a Family Nurse Practitioner is required. MultiCare Health System offers competitive compensation/benefits as well as flexible full-time and part-time schedules. For more information please contact Provider Services @ 800.621.0301 or send CV to blazenewtrails@multicare.org. Please reference opportunity #643-798-800. "MultiCare Health System is a drug free workplace"

Nurse Practitioners Wanted

Support the mission of Planned Parenthood of Western Washington (PPWW) by joining our talented & dedicated medical team. You may be eligible for a sign on bonus!

Seeking Clinician candidates to provide comprehensive reproductive health & family planning services.

WA State NP/CNM/PA-C w/prescriptive authority, current certification & CPR card required.

FT & PT positions available in the Puget Sound area.

Please submit cover ltr/resume to jobs@ppww.org; fax: (206) 328-6818; or Mail: PPWW/HR, 2001 E. Madison, Seattle, WA 98122
www.ppww.org EOE

Tacoma, WA - Occupational Medicine ARNP

MultiCare HealthWorks, a division of MultiCare Health System seeks an ARNP to join an established occupational medicine program. Qualified applicants must be flexible, self-motivated, committed to program development and have **at least 1 year** primary care or urgent care experience. As a MultiCare employee, you will enjoy excellent compensation, benefits and system-wide support. Email your CV to blazenewtrails@multicare.org or fax your CV to 866-264-2818. Website: www.multicare.org. Refer to opportunity #777-941. "MultiCare Health System is proud to be a drug free workplace"

ARNP Wanted

Busy cardiology office looking for FT ARNP to join the Spokane office. Responsible for office/hospital based physician support. Experience required in cardiology, IM and/or acute care. Candidate should enjoy autonomy; have excellent assessment, diagnostic ability and personable interactions w/patients & staff. Excellent salary & benefits DOE. Respond to: hr@inlandcardiology.com or Fax 509.462.3142.

CE Opportunities

24th Annual Infectious Disease Conference

December 11-13, 2008

Fairmont Olympic Hotel, 411 University Street, Seattle
\$375 registration fee (one day registration fees are available)
16.4 CEUs

To request a PDF brochure: Jeri.Sackett@providence.org

Healthy Humor

Kevo the Great, a world famous magician, went to his nurse practitioner for an annual examination. After a series of routine tests and questions, the NP asked the patient about his magic act. "What's your best trick"

"Sawing a woman in half," replied Kevo.

The NP was impressed. "That sounds really difficult."

"No, it's quite easy. I've been doing it since I was ten."

"Really, are there any more at home like you?"

"Just a half sister."

Meetings

Join us! Puget Sound Nurse Practitioners Association is a non-profit organization supporting ARNPs in Puget Sound since 1998. We meet every other month and offer a social hour/networking and a CME talk. Annual dues are \$35/\$17.50 for students. Apply for membership and find meeting information at <http://PSNPA.org>

Ad Information

Copy deadline is the second Tuesday of the month prior to publication. Ads may be accepted later than this on a space-available basis. Position Available Ads of less than 66 words are \$45, of 66 to 130 words are \$75, and greater than 130 words are \$105. Position Available Ads are priced per insertion. Continuing Education Announcements of less than 65 words are \$70, of 66 to 130 words are \$105, or 131 words or greater are \$130. Continuing Education Announcements are per offering for up to three (3) consecutive insertions. New Product An-

nouncements per product for one insertion of 130 words or less are \$75. Ad Inserts are \$550 for one issue. All ads are subject to space limitations and editing. Call for detailed rate information. Mail copy to ARNP Care, 10024 SE 240th St, #102, Kent, WA 98031. Phone 253.852.9042. Fax 253.852.7725. Email care@nurse.net.

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