

Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner Global Signature Authority

ARNPs are major providers of primary and specialty care services in Washington State

Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners (ARNPs) have provided primary and specialty health services to Washington State citizens for four decades, serving rural and urban communities including vulnerable and underserved patients.

The 2011-2012 Washington State Primary Care Provider Survey by the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, Idaho (WWAMI) Center for Health Workforce Studies show that

- ARNPs and Physician Assistants make up a third of the primary care workforce
- More ARNPs (3 in 5) receive their training within the state of Washington, more than physicians and physician assistants.
- 43% of ARNPs had training in rural communities

More access to care increases demand for ARNP services

With 700,000 individuals newly covered during the first enrollment year of the Exchange and Medicaid Expansion, availability of ARNP services must be maximized to meet the increased demand in primary care, specialty, and preventative services.

Patients are denied care due to a barrier against lawful ARNP authorization

Some Washington State statutes, rules, and corresponding documents or forms do not reflect current ARNP scope of practice law under RCW 18.79.

Continuity of care is delayed or jeopardized when patients of ARNPs must wait for needed services or incur additional expense when required to unnecessarily obtain a physician's signature. Examples include authorization for seclusion for acute mental illness, and some physical examination forms such as those required by schools.

A minor technical fix in legislation would assure and increase access to care, eliminate duplication of efforts by ARNPs, physicians, and health care providers, as well as reduce cost and prevent delays in service to patients.

This legislation does not change the scope of practice for ARNPs.

Proposed Legislation:

Adding a new Chapter to RCW 18.79, the Washington Nurse Practice Act to state:

"An advanced registered nurse practitioner may sign and attest to any certificates, cards, forms, or other required documentation that a physician may sign, so long as it is within the advanced registered nurse practitioner's scope of practice."