



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

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House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
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HCR 124/HR 100 – REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO CONDUCT AN ANALYSIS OF ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES

Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HCR 124/HR 100. This resolution requests the Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB) conduct an analysis of advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants; and to include the following:

- (1) The full scope of practice for advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants based on national professional guidelines;
- (2) The distinctions between the educational training and scope of practice between physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants; and
- (3) A comparative study of how Hawaii differs from other states regarding the scope of practice for advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants; and submit a report of its findings and recommendations from the analysis, including any proposed legislation.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) notes that the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials provides a clearinghouse of unbiased, objective information on state scope of practice policy, including Hawai'i, related to addiction counselors, dental hygienists, dental therapists, licensed professional counselors, nurse practitioners, peer support specialists and physician assistants.¹ A comprehensive review of the remaining barriers to full scope of practice in the Hawai'i Revised Statutes and Hawai'i Administrative Rules, followed by state agency and legislative action to remove barriers is welcomed by regulatory, nursing education, and employer constituents.

¹ <https://scopeofpracticepolicy.org/states/hi/>. Accessed March 18, 2021.

The primary purpose of scope of practice regulation is to protect public safety. Professional scope of practice or competence is found in model practice acts developed by a profession and describes the services that its members are trained and competent to perform. State licensing boards-governed by state regulations and statutes-are the final arbiters of who is recognized to practice within a given state. The UH notes that Hawai'i statute places the regulation of both entry level (RN) and advanced nursing practice (APRN) exclusively with the Hawai'i Board of Nursing.

The Legislature has authorized full scope of practice by APRNs in newer legislation and state agencies have written their corresponding administrative rules to reflect the change. However, we have encountered many statutes and administrative rules that limit practice to the provider/s specifically named. Where the APRN is not named specifically in the HRS, the ability to deliver the service in accordance with present nurse practice statute is unrecognized. These older laws and rules do not align with the scope of nursing practice established in Chapter 457.

A thorough review, that includes state agencies, is needed to identify all these older Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) and administrative rules to ensure the statutes and their corresponding rules are updated to align with the state (Chapter 457) Nurse Practice Act.

Since 2006, the UH Mānoa School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene has worked alongside state legislators and the State Board of Nursing (BON) to ensure that graduates of our APRN degree programs receive the education to become quality and competent APRN nurse practitioners. In 2008, 48 professional nursing and healthcare organizations endorsed the *Consensus Model for APRN Regulation*. In 2009, the legislature recognized to need to increase access to healthcare statewide and understood the key role APRNS play in local communities.

Hawai'i passed Act 169, SLH 2009, which (1) recognized APRNs as primary care providers for insurance purposes and (2) provided APRNs with global signature authority. In 2011, the UH campuses at Mānoa and Hilo launched the first two doctor of nursing practice degree (DNP) programs in the state educating primary care nurse practitioners. Today, both programs are nationally accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Follow-up of our alumni, as required by our accreditors, indicates these graduates have remained in Hawai'i to practice in both urban and rural settings on all islands providing care to underserved populations.

UH commends the Legislature for identifying this opportunity for a review by the LRB. Thank you for your longstanding support for the state nursing workforce and access to care for the people in our state.