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VA Proposes to Grant Full Practice Authority to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses

Proposed Rule Will Improve Veteran Access to Care and Use of Resources

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is proposing a rule to grant full practice authority to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN) when they are acting within the scope of their VA employment. Full practice authority will help optimize access to VA health care by permitting APRNs to assess, diagnose, prescribe medications and interpret diagnostic tests. This action proposes to expand the pool of qualified health care professionals authorized to provide primary health care and other related health care services to the full extent of their education, training, and certification to Veterans without the clinical supervision of a physician.

APRNs are clinicians with advanced degrees and training who provide primary, acute and specialty health care services. APRNs complete masters, post-master or doctoral degrees. There are four APRN roles: Certified Nurse Practitioner, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist and Certified Nurse Midwife. All VA APRNs are required to obtain and maintain current national certification.

“The purpose of this proposed regulation is to ensure VA has authority to address staffing shortages in the future,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David J. Shulkin. “Implementation of the final rule would be made through VHA policy, which would clarify whether and which of the four APRN roles would be granted full practice authority. **At this time, VA is not seeking any change to VHA policy on the role of CRNAs**, but would consider a policy change in the future to utilize full practice authority when and if such conditions require such a change,” Shulkin said. “This is good news for our APRNs, who will be able to perform functions that their colleagues in the private sector are already doing.”

The [American Nurses Association](http://www.nurses.org) (ANA) applauds VHA’s leadership for proposing to grant full practice authority to the four types of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses. “VA will be able to more effectively meet the health care needs of our nation’s Veterans,” said ANA President Pamela Cipriano. “This proposal removes barriers that prevent APRNs from providing a full range of services and will assist VA in its ongoing efforts to address staff shortages and improve Veterans’ access to care. APRNs are critical members of the health care workforce and an integral component of the health care delivery system with a proven track record of safe quality care and high patient satisfaction.”

The proposed rule can be found for comment at www.regulations.gov.