

May 18, 2016

Pennsylvania State Senate
200 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: AMA opposition to Pennsylvania Senate Bill 717

Dear Senators:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and student members, I am writing to express our **opposition to Senate Bill (S.B.) 717**, which would allow Nurse Practitioners (NPs) to practice independent of physician supervision, collaboration, or oversight, thereby giving NPs expanded authority to diagnose, treat and prescribe to patients without restriction and without any physician involvement. We believe the changes proposed may undermine the delivery of patient-centered, team-based care in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania's patients need health care professionals to work together

New health care delivery system reforms hinge on a team-based approach to care. With seven years or more of postgraduate education and thousands of hours of clinical experience, physicians are uniquely qualified to lead the health care team. Physicians, physician assistants, nurses and other health care professionals have long worked together to meet patient needs for a reason: the physician-led team approach to care works.

However, independent practice and team-based care take health care delivery in two very different directions. One approach would further compartmentalize and fragment health care delivery; the other would foster integration and coordination. Moreover, as data suggest, independent practice of NPs does not lead to increased access to care or greater distribution of health care professionals across the state.

Roles within the health care team should be based on education and training

The AMA believes that a physician is in the best position to serve as the leader of the health care team. Physicians' education, clinical training, and continuing medical education ensures that they are well equipped to diagnose and manage patient care. Physicians undertake more than 10,000 hours of clinical education and training during their four years of medical school and three-to-seven years of residency training. In comparison, NPs have only between 500-720 hours of nursing education and training.

Patients want physicians to lead the health care team

Patients recognize that physicians are most qualified to lead the health care team. AMA surveys conducted in 2010 and 2012 found that patients overwhelmingly want a coordinated approach to health care, with a physician leading the team. Key findings from these surveys include:

- Ninety-one percent of respondents said that a physician's years of education and training are vital to optimal patient care, especially in the event of a complication or medical emergency.
- Eighty-six percent of respondents said that patients with one or more chronic conditions benefit when a physician leads the health care team.
- Four out of five patients prefer a physician to have primary responsibility for leading and coordinating their health care.

AMA data also show that the vast majority of patients (79 percent) **do not support** NPs practice that is independent of physicians, without physician supervision, collaboration or oversight. Rather, nearly all patients think that physicians and NPs should practice in a coordinated manner. In this time of increased collaboration and integration, S.B. 717 goes against what patients want.

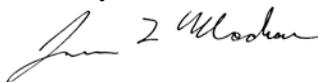
Physician-led teams have a proven track record of success

In addition to the above, physician-led health care teams are proven to provide high quality, cost-effective care. High-functioning health care systems including Geisinger Health System, Intermountain Healthcare, Kaiser Permanente, and Mayo Clinic are all examples of physician-led organizational models. In these organizations and other physician-led teams, the focus shifts toward what the team can do rather than what the individual practitioner can do. At a time when patients need increased care coordination to ensure the highest levels of care, the AMA believes emphasis should be placed on models of care that have a proven track record of success.

As the provision of health care in this country becomes more complex, a fully coordinated, quality-focused and patient-centered health care team will be the optimal means by which Americans will receive their health care. In the physician-led team approach, each member of the team plays a critical role in delivering efficient, accurate, and cost-effective care to patients. The AMA is committed to helping all members of the health care team work together in a coordinated, efficient manner to achieve the triple aim in health care: ensure that Pennsylvania's patients receive the highest quality of health care, at the lowest cost, resulting in the most optimal clinical outcomes. S.B. 717 is contrary to this goal.

The AMA thanks you for the opportunity to submit these comments. Based on all of the above, we strongly urge you to **oppose S.B. 717**. If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Schleiter, JD, LLM, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center at kristin.schleiter@ama-assn.org or (312) 464-4783.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD

Enclosure

cc: Pennsylvania Medical Society
Andrew W. Gurman, MD
Stephen R. Permut, MD, JD
Carl A. Sirio, MD

Patient support for physician-led health care teams

New health care delivery system reforms hinge on a team-based approach to care. With their seven years or more of postgraduate education and more than 10,000 hours of clinical experience through acquired training, physicians are uniquely qualified to lead the health care team. Physicians, physician assistants, nurses and other health care professionals have long worked together to meet patient needs for a reason: the physician-led team approach to care works. Patients win when each member of the health care team plays the role they are educated and trained to perform.

A 2012 survey found that patients overwhelmingly want a coordinated approach to health care, with a physician leading the health care team.¹ Key findings include:

- ▶ **Ninety-one percent** of respondents said that a physician's years of education and training are vital to optimal patient care, especially in the event of a complication or medical emergency.
- ▶ **Eighty-six percent** of respondents said that patients with one or more chronic conditions benefit when a physician leads the primary health care team.
- ▶ **Four out of five** patients prefer a physician to have primary responsibility for leading and coordinating their health care.

▶ **THREE
OUT OF FOUR**

patients prefer to be treated by a physician ...

- Even if it takes longer to get an appointment
- Even if it costs more

Do you agree with the following statement?	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not sure (%)	Don't know (%)
Physicians and nurses need to work in a coordinated manner to ensure that patients get the care they need	98	2	0	0
While nurse practitioners are essential to the health care team, they should assist the physician, who should take the lead role in determining the type and level of care to be administered	88	9	2	1
Only physicians have the education and training to look for and diagnose both common and complex medical conditions	83	10	5	2
Nurse practitioners should not be allowed to run their own medical practices without physician involvement	78	19	1	1
Nurse practitioners should not be able to practice independently of physicians, without physician supervision, collaboration or oversight	79	17	3	0
Physicians, rather than nurse practitioners, should diagnose medical conditions	78	16	5	0
Patients benefit when a physician leads the health care team	75	19	3	3

Should only a medical doctor or doctor of osteopathic medicine be allowed to perform the following procedures or should other health care professionals be allowed to perform this specific activity?	Only a medical doctor (%)	Other health care professional (%)	Both equally/ either one (%)	Don't know (%)
Amputations of the foot?	92	5	2	2
Diagnose and treat heart conditions?	92	4	3	1
Surgical procedures on the eye that require the use of a scalpel?	90	5	2	3
Treat emergency or traumatic medical conditions, which may be life threatening?	90	4	5	1
Facial surgery such as nose shaping and face lifts?	87	7	3	6
Write prescriptions for complex drugs, including those that carry risk of abuse or dependence?	83	10	5	2
Administer and monitor anesthesia levels and patient condition before and during surgery?	78	15	6	1
Diagnose and treat chronic diseases like diabetes	78	15	6	1
Write prescriptions for medication to treat mental health conditions such as schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder?	77	11	6	4

1. Baseline & Associates conducted a telephone survey on behalf of the AMA Scope of Practice Partnership between March 8–12, 2012. Baseline & Associates surveyed 801 adults nationwide. The overall margin of error is +/- 3.5 percent at the 95 percent level.