

March 3, 2017

The Honorable Merv Riepe
Chair
Health and Human Services Committee
Nebraska Legislature
Room 1402
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509

Re: Legislative Bill 466 – **Oppose**

Dear Chairman Riepe:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I write to express our **opposition** to Legislative Bill (LB) 466. This bill would allow certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) to practice independent of physician supervision, collaboration, or oversight. As a result, LB 466 would give CNMs expanded authority to diagnose, treat, and prescribe without restriction and without physician involvement. Our reasons for opposition are outlined below.

Nebraska’s patients need health care professionals to work together.

Health care delivery system reforms hinge on a team-based approach to care. With seven or more years 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 clinicians have long worked together to meet patient needs for a reason: the 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, CNM independent practice does not lead to increased access to care or greater distribution of health care professionals.

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, CNMs have only between 500-720 hours of advance 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 found that patients overwhelmingly want a coordinated approach to health care, with a physician leading the team. Key findings from these surveys include:

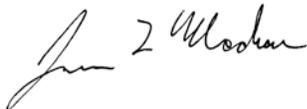
- Ninety-one percent of respondents said that a physician's years of education and training are vital to patient care, especially in the event of complication or medical emergency.
- Eighty-six percent of respondents said that patients with one or more chronic conditions benefit when a physician leads 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 advanced practice nursing independent of physicians, without physician supervision, collaboration or oversight. Rather, nearly all patients think that physicians and advanced practice registered nurses – including CNMs – should practice in a coordinated manner. In this time of increased collaboration and integration, LB 466 goes against what patients want.

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 Nebraska's patients receive the highest quality of health care, at the lowest cost, resulting in the most optimal clinical outcomes. LB 466 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 LB 466. If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Schleiter, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at kristin.schleiter@ama-assn.org or (312) 464-4783.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD

cc: Nebraska Medical Association