



**American Academy of Nurse Practitioners  
American College of Nurse Practitioners  
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties**

## **Nurse Practitioner Perspective for Health Care Reform**

As the plans for Health Care Reform unfold in the new administration, it is important that access to high quality primary care services that emphasize health promotion, disease prevention, and the effective management of chronic disease be a primary focus. To this end, it is important to recognize and include nurse practitioners in the reform process and plans that are being developed. As well, health care reform focusing on primary care services should utilize the Institute of Medicine (IOM) definition of primary care ("the provision of integrated, accessible health care services by clinicians who are accountable for addressing a large majority of personal health care needs, developing a sustained partnership with patients and practicing in the context of family and community").

Approximately 80% of nurse practitioners provide primary care services throughout the United States. According to the spring 2008 report of the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC), nurse practitioners provide the highest percentage of primary care visits compared to other Part B providers in the Medicare Fee for Service Program. Care provided by nurse practitioners epitomizes the delivery of high quality, cost-effective primary care and meets the NCQA and MedPAC standards of care for such entities as the Primary Care Medical/Health Care Home.

To ensure maximum value of health care reform in the United States, we recommend that the following issues be addressed.

### **Scope**

- \* Full recognition and utilization of nurse practitioners as primary care providers
- \* Nurse practitioners inclusion in the design and development of all health care reform models
- \* Prohibition of discrimination against qualified licensed health care providers, such as nurse practitioners, in health care reform plans.

- \* Utilization of providers such as nurse practitioners to their full scope of practice under state law
- \* Assurance that states recognize nurse practitioners as Medicaid Primary Care Case Managers to assure access to and provision of high quality Medicaid Services
- \* Recognition of nurse practitioners as leaders in coordinated care models such as Medical/Health Care/Advanced Primary Care Homes
- \* Inclusion of nurse practitioners and nurse practitioner-led practices in authorized demonstration or pilot programs
- \* Reimbursement authorization
- \* Incentives for participation in comprehensive coordinated care models
- \* Authorization for nurse managed health care centers as Federally Qualified Health Centers
- \* Evaluation of nurse practitioner services within all applicable federally-funded research programs

### **Payment**

- \* Sustained and increased ability for nurse practitioners to receive direct payment for their services
- \* Removal of barriers to practice for nurse practitioners providing services to Medicare patients, including the certification for hospice and home health care services of their patients and the authorization to provide admitting services in skilled nursing facilities
- \* Reimbursement of nurse practitioners by Medicare for supervising medical students, residents and advanced practice nursing students in hospitals in the same manner physicians are reimbursed for the same services
- \* Appropriate funding for Nurse-Managed Health Care Centers
- \* Appropriate funding for nurse practitioner research through the National Institutes of Nursing Research (NINR), the Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality (AHRQ), and other funding agencies
- \* Inclusion of nurse practitioners as leaders and participants in the design and implementation of Health IT systems

### **Clinical Education**

- \* Increased development of nurse practitioner recruitment and incentive programs to address the shortage of primary care providers

Over the years, studies have consistently demonstrated that nurse practitioners provide high quality, cost effective primary care to patients of all ages in all walks of life. In order to maximize their access and effectiveness, it is crucial that nurse practitioners be able to function at the full extent of their license and scope of practice. These provisions will allow that to occur.