



Protecting Healthcare Quality, Access and Choice of Providers

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Coalition Members and AMA Initiate Dialogue On Creating Collaborative Healthcare Teams

Ongoing Discussion Will Protect Patient Access to Choice of Care Providers

In a step toward improving patient access to a range of healthcare professionals, members of the Coalition for Patients' Rights® recently met with the American Medical Association (AMA). Representatives from both organizations began a dialogue about how to create collaborative, interdisciplinary teams that focus on achieving the best health outcomes for patients.

The Coalition, which represents more than 35 healthcare organizations, was formed in 2006 to protect patients' ability to see the healthcare professional of their choice. The coalition has worked to support interprofessional communication and educate consumers about their range of choices in order to help them access the most appropriate care to meet their needs.

The meeting between the Coalition and the AMA was an opportunity for the two organizations to discuss approaches to meeting the growing demand for healthcare services.

"As more consumers gain insurance through healthcare reform, professionals will need to work together to serve the influx of patients," said Karen Kelly-Thomas, PhD, RN, FAAN, spokesperson for the Coalition. "We are pleased to have the opportunity to discuss with the AMA the best ways to offer patients not only access to healthcare, but also quality and value in the care they receive."

The Coalition's delegation of eight national organizations met with the AMA to support the goal of ensuring that all healthcare professionals can practice to the full extent of their qualifications. The AMA led an initiative to attempt to define the training, education, licensing and certification of other professionals in the healthcare sector. CPR is working to continually share accurate data and information about members' qualifications and valued role on the team.

The need for patients' access to a broad scope of healthcare professionals has been widely acknowledged and underscored by organizations working to advance the state of healthcare in the United States. The Institute of Medicine issued a report in October 2010 entitled "The Future of Nursing" that stated the imperative of interprofessional collaboration in enhancing the value, quality, and seamlessness of healthcare that patients need.

Coalition members and AMA representatives discussed effective ways of supporting interprofessional, multidisciplinary teams. All participants in the meeting agreed that integrating the services of all healthcare professionals is needed if the increasing demand for healthcare is to be met in the future.

Participants agreed to hold additional future meetings to continue the discussion around their respective roles in an integrated healthcare system.

Eight Coalition member organizations participated in the discussion:

- American Association of Naturopathic Physicians
- American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
- American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons
- American Nurses Association
- American Physical Therapy Association
- American Psychological Association Practice Organization
- American Speech-Language Hearing Association
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

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