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July 7, 2009

The Honorable Linda Lingle
Governor
State of Hawaii
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Governor Lingle:

The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) warmly thanks you for signing into law HB 1378 Relating to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (HB 1378). Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (PNPs) in Hawaii and elsewhere have enhanced the health care for children and families for decades by providing comprehensive services in a variety of settings. These and other nurse practitioners accomplish this while working both independent of and in collaboration with physicians. Comparative studies have shown definitively that NPs provide safe, effective primary care with clinical outcomes that mirror those of physicians. The evidence also shows remarkable patient satisfaction with the quality and accessibility of NPs.

Embracing nurse practitioners as providers of primary care is an important part of the solution to the primary care crisis in the country at this time. Their advanced preparation in primary care practice renders them especially well-qualified to participate in the delivery of primary care services to individuals and families from all walks of life and at all socioeconomic levels. The inclusion of nurse practitioners in Act 169 supports 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”).

The nurse practitioner’s scope of practice includes a range of services including diagnosis and management of acute episodic and chronic illness, that is inclusive of health promotion, disease prevention and end of life care. Their practice emphasizes preventive, curative and integrated care services as well as management, teaching and counseling for health promotion and disease prevention. Nurse practitioners also serve as health care researchers, inter-professional consultants and patient advocates. They are highly prepared professionals whose educational programs are grounded in specialized scientific and theoretical knowledge obtained in graduate level education with expanded clinical skills.

We understand that policy makers across the country face the considerable challenge of ensuring that access to health care is a right for all, rather than a privilege for a few. Nurse practitioners intend to serve as a part of the solution to the health care crisis in this country. We stand ready to serve our patients and are willing to work with policy makers to achieve real and lasting reform. We may be reached for further comment through president@napnap.org.

Again, thank you for your support of nursing and advanced practice nursing.

Sincerely,

Michelle Beauchesne, DNSc, RN, CPNP, FNAP, FAANP
President