

Nurse Practitioner Perspective on Requiring Team Based Care for Individual Licensure



States around the nation are facing increased challenges to ensure patients have appropriate access to care. As a result, many states are modernizing regulations to reflect the expertise and skill of the existing nurse practitioner workforce and remove bureaucratic and competitive barriers that artificially impede care delivery. Statutory and regulatory modernization for nurse practitioner licensure is endorsed by multiple organizations including the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, the Institute of Medicine, and the AARP. Underpinning this modernization are over fifty years of patient outcomes research showing nurse practitioners to be highly effective providers of health care.

The nurse practitioner community broadly supports patient-centered care and team-based care for health systems; however, we do not support creating statutory or regulatory requirements that link an individual clinician's ability to obtain state licensure to the formation of care teams with other disciplines, or regulations that require the existence of a care team for professional practice. Team-linked licensure requirements interfere with the ability for the profession to be regulated based on the preparation and the evaluation of a professional as a safe and competent provider of health care.

While health professional licensure is designed to insure that an individual clinician is safe and competent to provide care to the public, some discussions related to the healthcare system's interest in coordinating, communicating and integrating patient care have incorrectly interjected the concept of regulated care teams into the licensure requirements of individual clinicians. Tying regulated care teams to licensure impedes transparency, accountability, flexibility and the efficient use of individual clinicians.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Licensure is a structure that determines the requirements and capabilities that an individual clinician can provide to the patient.
- Team-based care is a system approach to care that integrates multiple providers, often from different disciplines, across settings around the specific needs of the patient.
- Team-based care is not a licensure concept. Individual clinician licensure should not be linked to a team structure in order to perform acts within one's professional discipline.
- The professional regulatory body (in the case of nursing, the Board of Nursing) should determine the licensure requirements and activities of practice that an individual licensee is allowed to provide, not another team-member--especially one from another discipline.
- Linked regulatory structures hinder transparency, accountability, and outcomes tracking of individual clinicians.
- License linked team-based care is not necessary. Care teams already form without regulation, and the needs of the patient should determine the composition and structure of the care team *at the point of care.*
- Team based care is a collaborative of various professionals centered on a patient's needs and should not be thought of as a physician led collaborative. Team based care is not a licensure construct.
- Requirements for membership in care teams for licensure may restrict patient choice and access to care. The Federal Trade Commission and the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice have published positions stating, "Recently, the FTC staff urged several states to reject or narrow restrictions that curtail competition among health care providers because they limit patients' access to health care and raise prices. In particular, staff examined APRN scope of practice restrictions that appear to exceed what is necessary to protect consumers." <http://www.ftc.gov/os/2011/05/V110007texasaprn.pdf>

Over fifty years of studies have consistently demonstrated that nurse practitioners provide high quality, cost effective care to patients of all ages in all walks of life. It is crucial that licensure and regulatory framework reflect the education, skill and expertise of clinicians to safely meet today's growing healthcare needs.

