



## HOME HEALTH CARE PLANNING IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2019 (S. 296 / H.R. 2150)

**Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs)** provide high-quality, affordable health care in areas where access to physicians is limited, particularly in medically underserved urban and remote rural areas.

The American Nurses Association is urging lawmakers to co-sponsor the bipartisan Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act (S. 296/H.R. 2150), which will allow APRNs to order home health care services. This act would protect patients and improve the efficiency of health care delivery by allowing APRNs to sign the final care plan to order home health care services for their most vulnerable patients. **This bipartisan bill had 183 cosponsors in the House and 47 in the Senate in the 115th Congress.**

Currently APRNs with patients who need home health care services are forced to delay care to their patients while they locate a physician who will verify their assessments. Not only is the patient inconvenienced by these delays, their health is jeopardized. In addition, Medicare incurs increased costs while beneficiaries are unnecessarily left in more expensive institutional settings or discharged prematurely without appropriate devices.

Outdated Medicare policy prevents these APRNs from providing appropriate, timely care for their patients. Medicare has recognized the autonomous practice of these APRNs for nearly two decades, as they provide most of the skilled care for home health patients. While these health care professionals are authorized to perform face-to-face assessments of a patient's needs, a physician must certify the assessment.

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### FACTS AT A

## GLANCE

**Advanced Practice Registered Nurses** APRNs include Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs), and Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs), and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs).

APRNs have been recognized as being able to practice autonomously by Medicare for two decades.

MedPAC recommended that APRNs bill Medicare directly, eliminating "incident to" billing for their services.

The American Enterprise Institute found that a large and growing body of research shows that the quality of care provided by nurse practitioners is as good and, in some cases, even better than the care provided by primary care physicians. But in many states, nurse practitioners are held back by laws that restrict their scope-of-practice.

The Administration recommended states should consider changes to their scope-of-practice statutes to allow all health care providers to practice to the top of their license, utilizing their full skill set.