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**TESTIMONY RE: H.B. 7161 AN ACT REVISING THE DEFINITION OF
ADVANCED NURSING PRACTICE**
Public Health Committee Hearing
March 5, 2007

Good morning Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and members of the Public Health Committee.

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA), the professional organization for registered nurses in Connecticut. I am Mary Jane Williams, past-president of the Connecticut Nurses' Association and current chairperson of its Government Relations Committee. I have practiced nursing for over 40 years and have been educating nurses in Connecticut for 35 years. Currently I am chair and professor of Nursing at the University of Hartford. We are providing testimony in support of H.B. No. 7161, AN ACT REVISING THE DEFINITION OF ADVANCED NURSING PRACTICE.

As we make critical decisions this year about the ability of patients to have access to quality, cost effective health care in Connecticut, we must consider how and who will care for the thousands of uninsured or underinsured patients. The expansion of services will call for well-qualified, affordable providers. This bill speaks to patients not only having access to but also being able to have a sustained relationship with an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN).

The literature is clear that for over 40 years APRNs have been safe, cost effective providers of care who have positive outcomes and receive high marks for patient satisfaction. Amending the statute by removing the mandated collaborative agreement will remove a barrier to accessing this important group of primary providers.

This change in the statute will:

- ◆ eliminate the mandated collaborative agreement with a physician but will maintain the current scope of practice of the APRN. This elimination will not change the APRN's professional practice.

- ◆ continue the safe and effective care that is provided by advanced practice registered nurses. The actual patient care will not be changed.
- ◆ maintain reference to continued collaboration with other health care providers in the state as the APRN makes health care decisions.
- ◆ increase utilization of APRNs – who through their education and certification – practice in a model that is based on health promotion, disease prevention, health education and counseling. These are necessary requisites for instituting “comprehensive disease management programs, aimed at reducing costs and improving quality of life for people with asthma, diabetes, hypertension and other chronic diseases.” (Connecticut Health First Initiative¹) which should be cornerstones of any health plans.
- ◆ have the potential, as Connecticut’s “efforts to increase data collection about quality and outcomes, to allow consumers to compare quality information and make better choices about health care and health care providers.”¹

Sen. Williams stated in a recent interview “that for too long, true reform in health care has been blocked by special interests. He calls his initiative Health First because it is time to put aside ideology and move beyond protecting special interests. It's time to focus on health first.”

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses provide quality, cost effective care. It is time we recognized their value in the provision of primary care in the Connecticut and put a stop to the limitation of their practice, by putting health first.

We urge the committee’s support of this bill and are available for questions.

Connecticut Nurses’ Association is a member of the Connecticut Coalition of Advanced Practice Nurses

American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), Region 1, Chapter 2
 Connecticut Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Society (CT APRNS)
 Connecticut Association of Nurse Anesthetists (CANA)
 Connecticut Nurses’ Association (CNA)
 Connecticut Society of Nurse Psychotherapists (CSNP)
 National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP), Connecticut Chapter
 The Northwest Nurse Practitioner Group