



Connecticut

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RE: AARP Support of S.B. 67, *AAC the Authority and Responsibilities of APRNs*

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee,

For AARP and approximately 600,000 AARP members in Connecticut, reliable access to quality health care is a top priority. That is why we continue to support efforts to modernize state nursing laws to increase access to Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) care.

SB 67 would improve outdated Connecticut health care rules by allowing APRNs to sign documents including:

- disability forms,
- Do Not Resuscitate orders,
- certificates for Connecticut's Homecare Option Program for the Elderly,
- home health and hospice services coverage under individual health insurance and Medicare supplement policies,
- certification for medical leave of absence and family leave of absence, and
- nursing home transfer and discharge forms.

Additionally, the bill allows APRNs signature authority to authorize essential services such as respiratory care, occupational therapy, rehabilitation services, and paramedic orders, as well as determination of incapacity when relevant to living wills, health care proxies, and insurance coverage for disabled children.

We urge the Connecticut General Assembly to pass the bill into law.

AARP Connecticut supports this legislation because it will put people first, by increasing consumer access to health care and reduce unnecessary health care costs. By improving outdated Connecticut health care rules, residents will no longer face delays in care due to limitations on APRNs, who have the training and skills to sign these documents

AARP is fighting to break down the barriers that prevent APRNs from using all their training and skills to approve care for patients, especially older people who need to receive care

Real Possibilities

at home to continue living independently—and stay out of costly nursing homes. These barriers often delay care to consumers and extend hospital stays, especially in cases where signatory approved medical equipment or therapy is required for outpatient care. This problem is particularly acute especially in rural and urban underserved areas where fewer physicians are available to sign off on a high volume of requests. Delays in care not only hurt the consumers, but place added stress on family caregivers, who are all too often overwhelmed with bearing the brunt of providing and overseeing the care of a loved one. It can also take precious time away from patient care by making physicians countersign forms completed by APRNs.

Further, AARP is calling on politicians to put people first, by supporting policies which improve care and continue to assure that Connecticut residents can receive quality care whenever and wherever they need it. APRNs serve in a wide variety of settings, including community health centers, medical offices and at home. Increased signature authority gives APRNs the ability to quickly and effectively authorize care outside of the hospital setting, where they may not have immediate access to physicians. The vast majority of Connecticut residents want to live independently as they age, and need access to routine care in a variety of settings so they can remain at home.

AARP is closely following the issue of signature authority on the national- as well as state-level. We know Connecticut would benefit from this policy because we have watched consumers and family caregivers and other states benefit from the same policy. Likewise, we know the most commonly cited concerns on increased signature authority simply have not materialized in other states that have adopted it.

AARP and stakeholders that support full practice authority have advocated for patients to receive full and direct access to APRNs, including on the issue of signature authority. In light of the evidence, national recommendations, expert health policy and health care endorsements, and the patient and health system benefits, the only question left is: why not take every opportunity to put patients first and cut red tape that restricts access to care?

Sincerely,

Nora L. Duncan
State Director, AARP Connecticut