



## APRN MODERNIZATION ACT

*Education Accreditation  
Certification Licensure*

**Goal of Legislation:** Wisconsin's Nurse Practice Act, State Statute Chapter 441, will better reflect the legal practice of Advanced Practice Nursing in Wisconsin using the agreed upon principles and terminology being adopted nationally. In Wisconsin the goal is to amend the current title, Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) and Advanced Practice Nurse Prescriber (APNP) and move to Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN).

**Who are Advanced Practice Registered Nurses:** APRNs are Registered Nurses who have acquired, through graduate-level education, advanced clinical knowledge and skills to provide direct patient care.

There are four distinct types of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses:

- Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM)
- Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA)
- Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)
- Nurse Practitioner (NP)

### **Recommendations**

Wisconsin State Statute Chapter 441 will be modernized to reflect a national consensus model being adopted across the country. To modernize Wisconsin's Nurse Practice Act, State Statute Chapter 441; the following principles will be applied:

- Add a definition for Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN)
- Provide formal licensure for advanced practice registered nurses (APRN), recognizing the four different practice roles listed above
- Repeal 441.15 – Nurse Midwife Practice Act
- Repeal 441.16 – Prescription Privileges for Advanced Practice Nurses
- Identify specific criteria to be licensed as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse:
  - national board certification
  - Master's Degree or higher in an APRN role; and
  - graduate from a school of nursing with national accreditation.
- Create the conditions for an APRN to prescribe
- Provide technical amendments to replace Advanced Practice Nurse Prescriber (APNP) with APRN.

### **Issue**

- Wisconsin's Nurse Practice Act, State Statute 441, is relatively silent when it comes to defining the role and responsibility of advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs).
- Legislation recognized advanced practice registered nurses in 1995 when subsets of these practitioners' were granted prescriptive authority. Wisconsin State Statute 441.16 was created to allow advanced practice nurses to prescribe medications under the conditions defined. APRNs practice beyond the realm of prescriber work. Clarity regarding their legal definition and role are needed.
- According to the a report of the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, APRNs play a critical role in alleviating provider shortages and expanding access to health care services for medically underserved populations.
- Currently in Wisconsin, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses cannot provide pharmacologic-related care without having a documented collaborative relationship with a physician. This has become an artificial barrier effectively giving one group of health care professionals the ability to restrict access to the market by another, competing group of health care professionals, thereby denying health care consumers the benefits of greater competition and access to care.

## **Facts About Wisconsin's Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs)**

- APRNs are registered nurses who have acquired, through graduate-level education, advanced clinical knowledge and skills to provide direct patient care.
- APRNs have advanced education, knowledge and skills to care for a specific population of patients, including adults, families, children and newborns and pregnant women.
- APRNs are educationally prepared to assess, diagnose, manage patient problems and perform procedures.
- APRNs provide services in a variety of settings, including hospitals, clinics, long term care, private offices and schools. Significantly, they are practicing in places where there is an increased demand for providers to meet the health needs of the communities they serve including psychiatric/mental health.
- The Department of Workforce Development reported that in 2016 there were 4,360 APRNs in Wisconsin, who are evenly distributed throughout the state. However, this is only 6.9% of the RN workforce, which is below the APRN national average of 11%.
- CNMs are the only APRNs that are licensed in Wisconsin. There are approximately 3,000 APRNs that have statutory authority to prescribe without further identification of their roles.
- Legislation is needed to recognize all APRNs through licensure.

## **Demand for APRNs is growing because:**

- Advanced practice nurse employment has increased 150% since 2009\*
- Primary care is focusing on patient-centered care coordination that requires prevention and health promotion services particularly for patients with chronic diseases. Nurse Practitioners and Clinical Nurse Specialists are found to be effective providers with excellent patient outcomes.
- Comprehensive women's health care across the life-span including obstetrics is increasingly the preferred method of health care delivery which is provided by Certified Nurse Midwives.
- The growth in Medicare eligible individuals in Wisconsin will increase from 13% (726,280) in 2005 to 22.3% (1,485,570) in 2035. This will require greater numbers of APRNs, to provide collaborative and coordinated team-based care in order to achieve quality health care outcomes and cost-efficiencies.
- The number of businesses offering on-site primary care and occupational health services benefits will continue to increase due to relevant, timely employee access to cost-effective and high-quality care provided by APRNs.
- Health care systems can attest to the benefits of utilizing APRNs in acute, primary, long-term care, occupational and other community settings.

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Wisconsin State Statute Chapter 441, Board of Nursing. <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/441>

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