

The Honorable Susan Donovan
House Committee on Health and Human Services
Rhode Island State House
Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

February 24, 2025

Re: Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 5428 titled AN ACT RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS — NURSE ANESTHETISTS

Dear Chairperson Donovan and Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services:

Good afternoon and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak about this bill. I am Jennifer Bernache, a lifelong resident from district 21 and a primary care nurse practitioner.

I oppose House Bill 5428 because restricting administration of medications categorized for minimal, moderate or deep sedation by a nurse practitioner. This would limit patient access to necessary care. I am providing this testimony to you not only as a nurse practitioner providing primary care for the past 8 years but as a RN who spent all her almost 8 years in bedside nursing as a Certified Pediatric Emergency Nurse in the pediatric emergency department at Hasbro Children's Hospital.

Restricting the access of nurse practitioners to administer medications listed in this bill would limit the access to safe and appropriate care, increase wait time in the already high volume, only pediatric emergency department in the state, and ultimately risk poor patient outcomes by delaying appropriate care to our pediatric population of RI.

This would also limit access to these sedation services provided by the Center for Pediatric Imaging and Sedation, and intern incredibly detrimental to the care of the children in this state. Having access to an option of sedated imaging and procedures is a vital resource, particularly the pediatric hematology-oncology patients needing these services. Restricting nurse practitioner administration of these medications would force many families to have to seek care outside of Rhode Island, adding financial and emotional stress to an already unimaginable time.

In regards to our scope of practice and prescriptive authority, as stated in RI Gen Laws, Title 216, Chapter 40, Subchapter 05, Part 3.7 - *an Advanced Practice registered Nurse (APRN) licensed by the board may prescribe, order, procure, administer, dispense and furnish over the counter, legend and controlled substances pursuant to applicable state and federal laws*. There is nothing in statute or regulation that prevents nurse practitioners from prescribing or administering these moderate sedation medications. The nurse practitioners in question who currently administer these medications are highly qualified and credentialed, with education that is beyond the basic requirements to meet professional and institution guidelines for safe administration of the medications for moderate sedation. Nurse practitioners are utilized to administer these medications meeting the standard set forth by the Joint Commission and they are fully credentialed and privileged via the hospital organization they work for.

I urge you to vote against House Bill 5428, not only because it imposes a restriction on the scope of practice of nurse practitioners in the aforementioned appropriate settings, but most importantly because it would create a tremendous lack of patient access to these important

services that nurse practitioners are currently able to provide in the already burdened state of health care in Rhode Island.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bernache

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House District 21