



Physicians Caring for Texans

House Public Health Committee
Testimony by Theresa Tran, MD, Texas Medical Association
House Bill 4404
April 17, 2023

Good (morning/afternoon/evening). My name is Dr. Theresa Tran, and I am an emergency medicine physician from Houston. On behalf of the Texas Medical Association and its more than 57,000 members, we thank Chairwoman Klick, Vice Chair Campos, and the members of the House Public Health Committee for the opportunity to respectfully testify in opposition to House Bill 4404.

TMA has serious concerns with this legislation. This bill is not really an APRN license portability bill but instead a bill aimed to supersede Texas scope of practice laws that require advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) to practice under physician delegation and supervision.

As an emergency medicine physician, I know the importance of prompt access to high-quality ER care. But substituting APRNs for physicians in ERs does not equate to better outcomes for patients, such as fewer hospital admissions and shorter inpatient stays.

There are research studies from which to learn. Stanford University performed a 3-year study evaluating the Veterans Health Administration's emergency departments with nurse practitioners delivering ER care independently without physician supervision or collaboration. The study found that NPs produced worse outcomes and increased costs.

Some key findings: Nurses practicing independently in an emergency department setting:

1. Raised 30-day preventable hospitalizations by 20%;
2. Increased the length of the overall hospital stays by 11%; and
3. Raised the cost of care in the emergency department by 7%, or about \$66 per patient.

Increasing the number of NPs on duty to decrease patient wait times raised total health care spending by 15%, or \$238 per case—not including the cost of additional NP salaries. In all, assigning 25% of emergency cases to NPs resulted in net increased costs of \$74 million annually for the VA.

When a patient presents in the ER, my goal is to promptly deliver the highest quality care he or she needs and have the patient home as soon as possible. The emergency department is the last place someone wants to be, but when the need arises, every patient deserves the highest level of coordinated care from their physician-led health care team.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions.