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December 2, 2011

Mr. William Ebenstein, Ph.D.

Co-chair, Workforce Flexibility/Change of Scope of Practice Work Group
University Dean for Health and Human Services
City University of New York

Mr. George Gresham,

Co-chair, Workforce Flexibility/Change of Scope of Practice Work Group
President
1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East

Dear Co-chairs Ebenstein and Gresham:

The availability of quality, accessible health care services to New York's 2.4 million AARP members is an ongoing goal of AARP New York. We have participated in various national and state meetings concerning issues associated with the future of nursing, which we see as a critical component in our continually evolving health care system. Our work has included collaboration in implementing the recommendations from the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) October 2010 report entitled, "The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health." The AARP Board of Directors has embraced all of the IOM recommendations and they are reflected in the AARP Policy and Priorities manual.

We strongly believe that New York State nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training and, thus, recommend the removal of scope-of-practice barriers for advanced practice registered nurses. Currently, Nurse Practitioners (NPs) are required to have a written practice agreement and practice protocols with a physician. However, NPs practice without required collaboration in 19 states. Enabling NPs to fully practice within their lawful scope will immediately streamline health care delivery in all settings and in underserved areas, particularly in inner-city urban and rural areas where some of the most vulnerable people, including older adults, reside.

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), likewise, provide care to underserved and vulnerable populations. Still, the 1,200 CRNAs in New York State, who are serving nearly two million patients annually, are not recognized in state regulation or law. While New York is the only state wherein CRNAs are not fully recognized by New York's Education Department, the four NYS graduate CRNA programs are accredited by the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Council on Accreditation. The time has come for New York State to join the rest of the nation in formally recognizing CRNAs.

A progressive and client-centered state aimed at ensuring access to quality care while redesigning a cost-effective health care delivery system would remove these scope-of-practice barriers. On behalf of New York's AARP members, we ask New York State to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lois Wagh Aronstein".

Lois Wagh Aronstein
State Director

cc
James Introne
Jason Helgerson