AARP Missouri supports Senate Bill 679. The purpose of this bill is to increase consumers’ access to healthcare by removing several barriers that prevent them from accessing the full amount of services that advanced practice registered nurses are qualified to provide. Decades of evidence demonstrate that advanced practice registered nurses have been providing as high quality health care as physicians to consumers.

This bill would incrementally increase consumers’ access to primary care services by removing the mandated collaborative agreement between a physician and advanced practice registered nurses and instead would allow a written protocol or a standing order. Missouri’s current requirements for contractual collaboration with advanced practice registered nurses can delay consumers’ access to care, especially in rural and urban underserved areas where there is a lack of available physicians with whom the nurse can collaborate. If SB 679 becomes law, AARP will track its progress to ensure that the written protocol or standing order does not interfere with consumers’ access to care.

This bill would immediately increase access to care for our most vulnerable citizens by increasing access to advanced practice registered nurse services under MO HealthNet. Consumers would have been able to get their necessary medications prescribed or services provided by an advanced practice registered nurse licensed would be reimbursed for their services by MO HealthNet.

This bill would increase Missouri citizens’ access to high quality anesthesia services by allowing certified registered nurse anesthetists to provide anesthesia services without supervision, which Missouri currently allows in rural areas of the state. Multiple studies support the cost-effective, high quality, safe, and low litigation associated with anesthesia care delivered by these nationally board certified nurse anesthetists. Therefore, this change would guarantee that all Missouri citizens have access to high quality and cost effective providers.

Missouri citizens with chronic pulmonary diseases would have greater access to respiratory care by granting advanced practice registered nurses the authority to practice. Furthermore, this bill would remove some of the restrictive barriers to prescribing controlled substances. AARP Missouri strongly believes that this legislation can have an immediate impact on improving health care by relieving pain and suffering.

AARP Missouri is deeply appreciative of the primary care and chronic care management provided by all physicians and advanced practice registered nurses. We need to be certain, however, that our members (750,000) and all health care consumers can access a primary care provider when and where they need one. This bill would increase access to care to high quality care for Missouri citizens and we therefore support it.