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February 9, 2016

Jeffrey Goldstein
Chief, Veterans Affairs and Defense Health Branch
OMB
725 17th St NW
Room 7013
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Goldstein:

We are writing to inform you of AARP's strong and longstanding support for efforts to improve consumer access by removing barriers to care provided by Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs). We are very pleased that the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) proposed rule to remove such barriers is now before the Office of Management & Budget for final review, and we urge you to approve the proposed rule so that it can be posted for comment in the Federal Register.

We need all health professionals practicing to the top of their license given the shortages that currently exist. Our nation's cadre of veterans is growing and aging and they rely on the VHA for timely, efficient, and high-quality care. Numerous studies have documented a growing shortage of physicians available to care for all Americans (Association of American Medical Colleges, 2012). Other studies have carefully documented the ability of advanced practice nurses to provide high quality care (Newhouse et al, 2011).

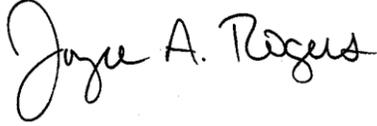
Furthermore, allowing APRNs to practice to the full extent of their education and training is in keeping with the recommendations of the landmark 2011 report by the Institute of Medicine Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health and the recently released Independent Assessment of VHA healthcare delivery prepared by the RAND Corporation pursuant to the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 (Choice Act). Both reports call for the removal of barriers to full APRN practice. Importantly, this change would also align VHA policy with the models already practiced by our U.S. Armed Forces, Indian Health Service, and Public Health Service systems.

AARP
Real Possibilities

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February 9, 2016
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Thank you for your prompt attention to this important proposed rule.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joyce A. Rogers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joyce A. Rogers
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs