



June 30, 2014

Sloan D. Gibson
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
801 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Acting Secretary Gibson,

The American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) would like to express our unwavering support for the Veterans Administration's (VA) work to modernize the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Nursing Handbook, and urge you to advance the approval process. With more than 9,800 members, APNA is the largest professional membership organization committed to the specialty practice of psychiatric-mental health (PMH) nursing and wellness promotion, prevention of mental health problems and the care and treatment of persons with psychiatric disorders.

We commend the VHA's proposal to recognize APRNs (including nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, certified registered nurse anesthetists and clinical nurse specialists) as full practice providers when providing care in a VA facility. This recommendation supports the profession to practice to the full extent of APRN education and training. We believe this will further facilitate timely delivery of high-quality health care to our nation's service men and women.

APRNs are educated to provide evidence-based care to specific patient populations and are qualified to diagnose and treat a variety of conditions. APRNs practice in a diversity of healthcare settings and are often depended upon by underserved communities as the sole advanced practice clinician. The Federal Trade Commission, the Institute of Medicine, the National Governors Association and other policy bodies have noted the quality of care APRNs provide and the impact it makes on not only healthcare competition, but access to services in great demand.

Again, we applaud the VA for working to recognize APRNs as full practice providers, as this directly responds to the decades of empirical evidence that shows the care provided by APRNs is of high quality, reduces healthcare costs, and increases access. If our organization can be of any assistance in this endeavor, please contact Executive Director Nicholas Croce Jr., MS at ncroce@apna.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia D. Cunningham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patricia D. Cunningham, DNSc, APRN, BC
President, American Psychiatric Nurses Association