



Support

SB 576 – Health Occupations – Nurse Practitioners – Certifications of Competency and Incapacity

February 11, 2020

EHEA Committee members:

I am certified as an adult nurse practitioner and a psychiatric nurse practitioner. In my 30+ years as a nurse practitioner I have worked extensively with patients in long term care settings - nursing homes, assisted livings, group homes and other chronic care facilities.

Last month I had a patient who I had assessed as incapable to make his own medical decisions, but I was unable to sign the form due to the law requiring 2 physicians to sign the form for incapacity. I talked to the primary care physician, he saw the patient and signed the form, but the medical director was not going to be in the building for 2 more days to sign off. The delay in having the completed incapability/incapacity determination, which allowed a family member or other responsible party to make a decision on the patient's behalf, resulted in the patient being transferred to the hospital for acute treatment and hospitalization.

Currently I have a patient with Schizophrenia and a moderate Intellectual Disability; he is his own responsible party. He was diagnosed with Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus over a year ago. His caregiver took him to an appointment with a surgeon who asked the patient if he wanted to have a tube put in his head to drain the fluid from the brain. The patient said no because he was not sick (he could not literally see anything wrong with himself) – he was not capable of understanding the falls, the incontinence, the worsening cognition was because of NPH. The patient went back to his group home where his symptoms worsened – the PCP signed the incapacity form but I was unable to co-sign, so an appointment with a second physician would be needed to evaluate the patient and co-sign the form so that a responsible party or family member could help make a medical decision for this pt. To date, the patient has not been seen by the second physician; the patient is now in a wheelchair, completely incontinent and more cognitively impaired.

Please contact me, Dr. Elaine Crain, MAAPC's President, (410-703-0556, TheMAAPC@gmail.com) or Lorraine Diana, our Legislative Chair (301-980-8004), for any information you may need about Nurse Practitioners or SB 576. MAAPC is represented in Annapolis by John Favazza (jfavazza@maniscanning.com, 410-263-7882).

I respectfully ask that you support SB 576,

Susan Kraus, MSN, CRNP-A, CRNP-PMH