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Senate Bill 312 Health Occupations – Nurse Anesthetists – Drug Authority and Collaboration
FAVORABLE
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 10, 2022

Good Afternoon Chair Pinsky and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan, Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. AARP MD has over 870,000 members in Maryland. AARP Maryland and its members support Senate Bill 312 **Health Occupations – Nurse Anesthetists – Drug Authority and Collaboration**. We thank Senator Reilly for sponsoring this important legislation.

SB 312 authorizes a nurse anesthetist to prescribe, order, and administer drugs, including controlled dangerous substances, without obtaining approval from a practitioner with whom the nurse anesthetist collaborates.

Nurses do remarkable things for the people they serve. For many family caregivers, nurses are lifesavers, providing care for their older loved ones at home — often after a hospitalization or while treating a serious medical condition. They are one of the reasons many older Americans can continue to live at home, where they want to be — and not in costly institutions such as nursing homes.

Nurse practitioners have completed additional education and training at the master's or doctoral level. This means they're qualified to diagnose and treat patients, order and evaluate diagnostic tests, prescribe medications and more. They should be able to practice to the full extent of their training.

Every American deserves a highly skilled nurse when and where nursing skills are needed. A richly skilled, effectively integrated nursing workforce — with enough professionals to meet the need — is essential to delivering high-quality health care.

AARP believes that high-quality, patient-centered health care for all will require remodeling many aspects of the health care system, especially nursing. Nurses should be able to practice to full extent of their education and training. State nurse practice should be amended to all Advance Practice Registered Nurse to fully and independently practice as defined by their education and certification.

These changes could mean for Older Marylanders:

- Less travel to medical offices for a family caregiver to organize, instead allowing a nurse practitioner to prescribe certain prescriptions at a patient's home.

- Removal of outdated barriers that prohibit nurse practitioners from providing care to their patients to the full extent of their education and training.
- Additional opportunities for patients to get routine health care in a variety of settings close to home, like medical offices, community health centers, in the workplace and at home.
- Medical or nursing tasks may be delegated to a trained home-care worker instead of falling on the family caregiver.

As part of our caregiving campaign, AARP has been working across the states to give nurses more authority to heal, and already, progress has been made. AARP members are watching for policy solutions and legislation that would fully realize nurses' potential contribution to a patient-centered, transformed health care system in the following areas:

- **Removing Barriers to Practice and Care:** Modernize outdated policies (public and private) and change state and federal laws and regulations to allow nurses to practice to the full extent of their education and training.
- **Patient-Centered Transformed Health Care System:** Advances and contributions to the research, advocacy and communications strategies through the national network of professional and health care related stakeholders.

For these reasons AARP respectfully request a favorable report on SB 312 For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan, Associate State Director of Advocacy at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451