



GAPNA-Great Lakes Chapter Testimony in Support of S.B. 481
Senate Health Policy Committee, May 31st, 2012

Good afternoon. I'd like to thank Chairman Marleau and esteemed members of the committee for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of S. B. 481. I am honored today to represent the Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association (GAPNA) – Great Lakes Chapter and share with you how Nurse Practitioners (NP's) are caring for Michigan's older adults. GAPNA is a non-profit professional organization whose focus is in support of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN's) who advocate and provide quality health care for older adults in Michigan.

Others have already identified the fact that there are more than 4,100 NP's holding valid Registered Nursing licenses and national specialty certification as NP's and whom the State of Michigan, and other states, recognize as providers of health care. Additionally, data supports the fact that approximately 54% of NP's in Michigan practice in primary care across the life-span. Many of these same NP's focus predominantly on the provision of care for Michigan's older adult population not only in primary care office practices, but in hospitals, managed care organizations, specialty care clinics (Alzheimers' clinics, etc.), acute and sub-acute rehabilitation/skilled nursing facilities, continuing care retirement communities, hospice and home care to name a few.

It is a fact that that one of the fastest growing segments of our population is older adults, those individuals over the age of 65. Nationally, by the year 2030, more than 70 million Americans will be 65 and older, representing 20% of the population. Based on the 2010 Michigan Office of Services to the Aging Report, 1.8 million individuals were over the age of 60 representing nearly 18% of Michigan's population (not too far from the 20% predicted by the year 2030 nationally and

this is only 2012) . Yes, this Silver Tsunami is upon us. There is clear truth to the Institute of Medicine's recommendations related to the need for more providers, both physician and NP providers, to handle the present and future demand for health care services.

Clearly, there are few issues more important to older adults in Michigan and the US than the availability and affordability of quality health care services. At this point in time, health insurance is no longer a guaranteed retiree benefit and many seniors face the challenge of unmanageable medical costs. Not only are they concerned about direct health care delivery, but also disease prevention, wellness promotion, acute and chronic disease self-management and others. This is the focus of an NP's practice. However, the current Public Health code does little to support this practice.

Whether or not the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is deemed constitutional this coming month, the fact remains that this population's demands for health care providers and services will be greater than what the current state of our system will be able to handle unless changes are made to the Public Health Code which will allow APRN's to deliver health care services and to practice to the full extent of their education, training and national certification.

Thank you for allowing this testimony to be heard and to contribute to our great State's ability to work toward a healthier health care environment that addresses all "our citizen's" needs and retains the best and brightest NP's for the future. I respectfully request your support of S.B. 481 and offer my support for assistance to the chair and committee members as needed.

Respectfully submitted,

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Gerontological Nurse Practitioner – Board Certified

Immediate Past President, GNPAN-Great Lakes Chapter