INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2019-168

REQUESTING THAT THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE,
AND LABOR STUDY THE ROLE OF AN ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE
AS A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER WITHIN THE ARKANSAS MEDICAID PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, the demand for primary care services in the United States is
expanding and expected to continue expanding over the next several years as a
result of the growth and aging of the population of the United States; and

WHEREAS, in the 2015 Primary Care Needs Assessment, the Office of Rural
Health and Primary Care of the Department of Health identified the following
three (3) main challenges to healthcare progress in Arkansas:

    (1) The supply, capacity, and distribution of primary care
providers in Arkansas is not sufficient to meet the healthcare needs of
Arkansas and is not likely to change in the short term;

    (2) There are gaps in healthcare access, quality of care, and
geographic barriers that negatively impact care in rural and underserved
communities and populations; and

    (3) The demand for healthcare services will be driven by a
rapidly increasing population of elderly Arkansans and a general population
that experiences differentially high rates of chronic disease; and

WHEREAS, Arkansas has over fifty-eight thousand (58,000) registered
nurses and over three thousand five hundred (3,500) advanced practice
registered nurses; and

WHEREAS, the Arkansas Medicaid Program, including the patient-centered
medical home model and the Arkansas Medicaid Primary Care Case Management
Program, does not recognize advanced practice registered nurses as primary
care providers despite the advanced education and training in primary care
received by an advanced practice registered nurse; and

WHEREAS, in the article entitled "Tapping Nurse Practitioners to Meet
Rising Demands for Primary Care" issued by the Kaiser Family Foundation, it
was found that:

1   (1)   Close to ninety percent (90%) of advanced practice
2 registered nurses are prepared or trained in primary care;
3   (2)   Advanced practice registered nurses can manage eighty to
4 ninety percent (80-90%) of care provided by primary care physicians; and
5   (3)   Advanced practice registered nurses are significantly more
6 likely than primary care physicians to practice in urban and rural areas,
7 provide health care in a wider range of community settings, and serve a high
8 proportion of uninsured patients and other vulnerable populations; and
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10   WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine's 2011 report entitled "The Future
11 of Nursing, Leading Change, Advancing Health" issued recommendations to
12 ensure that registered nurses and advanced practice registered nurses
13 practice to the fullest extent of their licensure, accreditation,
14 certification, and education as well as perform as full partners in the
15 redesign of health care in the United States; and
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17   WHEREAS, these recommendations serve as a blueprint toward a healthcare
18 system that provides patient-centered and evidence-based quality health care
19 with improved health outcomes by utilizing nurses, which are the nation's
20 largest healthcare workforce; and
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22   WHEREAS, a study by the Institute of Medicine shows that a higher
23 concentration of primary care providers, particularly advanced practice
24 registered nurses and registered nurses, results in a higher quality of
25 health care and lower costs for the healthcare system; and
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27   WHEREAS, other studies demonstrate that advanced practice registered
28 nurses are more likely to practice in medically underserved areas than
29 primary care physicians, which increases access for Medicaid beneficiaries;
30 and
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32   WHEREAS, forty-two (42) states across the nation, have amended state
33 laws to expand the scope of practice for advanced practice registered nurses
34 to practice primary care as a primary care provider; and
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1   WHEREAS, a report by the National Governors Association found that

2 health care provided by an advanced practice registered nurse "is comparable"

3 to health care provided by a physician "on several process and outcome

4 measures" and that advanced practice registered nurses "may provide improved

5 access to care"; and

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7   WHEREAS, if regulatory and statutory barriers to utilization of the

8 advanced practice registered nurse as a primary care provider were removed,

9 advanced practice registered nurses have the potential to create new access

10 points for patients and Medicaid beneficiaries throughout the state by

11 opening new clinics and to increase the employment rates of the state by

12 employing new individuals in Arkansas communities; and

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14   WHEREAS, the opportunity exists to more fully utilize advanced practice

15 registered nurses in the healthcare system of Arkansas; and

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17   WHEREAS, for the health of Arkansas citizens, the General Assembly

18 should pursue efforts to improve access to health care by utilizing the

19 adaptive capacity of advanced practice registered nurses across the

20 healthcare continuum,

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22 NOW THEREFORE,

23 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR OF

24 THE NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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26   THAT the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor study the

27 role of advanced practice registered nurses as primary care providers within

28 the Arkansas Medicaid Program to the fullest extent of their licensure,

29 accreditation, certification, and education.

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31   BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT, upon request, the Arkansas Nurses

32 Association and the Arkansas State Board of Nursing provide assistance to the

33 House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor to perform this study.

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1   Respectfully submitted,

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5   Representative Justin Gonzales

6   District 19

7   Prepared by: JMB/JMB

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