

March 8, 2023

## Legislators Propose Bill to Empower Advanced Practice Nurses, Expand Access to Quality Health Care

**MADISON** – If enacted, a newly re-introduced legislative proposal would add Wisconsin to the growing list of states that have eliminated unnecessary restrictions on Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) – nurses with advanced degrees and hundreds of hours of clinical training.

Senators Patrick Testin (Stevens Point), Rachael Cabral-Guevara (Appleton) and Kelda Roys (Madison) partnered with Representative Gae Magnafici (Dresser) to author the legislation which would enable APRNs to practice to the full extent of their experience and education.

“APRNs are knowledgeable, compassionate, and highly educated; they are a critical element of our health care workforce,” said Senator Testin. “Twenty-six states – as politically diverse as Connecticut and Utah – plus the District of Columbia have enacted reforms similar to what we are proposing. Wisconsin must recognize that APRNs are qualified to heal.”

During the pandemic, Wisconsin cut the red tape restricting APRNs to meet the increased demand on the health care workforce, a fact that Senator Cabral-Guevara, herself a licensed Advance Practice Nurse Prescriber/Family Nurse Practitioner, underscored.

“The State of Wisconsin recognized our value and our qualifications during the pandemic,” noted Cabral-Guevara. “Now, some in government are content with us sliding backward. That’s unacceptable. This bill moves us forward.”

Proponents of the bill emphasized its ability to increase access to healthcare for people who live in underserved areas.

"As a representative from rural Wisconsin and a nurse with more than three decades of experience, I know how vital this bill is to cutting red tape and improving access," said Representative Magnafici. "More than one million Wisconsinites live in an area with a shortage of healthcare professionals – that has to change."

This legislation has earned bi-partisan support, and the bill’s backers believe that it is a critical time to enact reform.

“Wisconsin has a crisis in access to health care. This bill will increase access to underserved communities throughout the state and help address Wisconsin’s shameful racial disparities,” Senator Roys said. “Additionally, this bill will help give families more options for childbirth which will result in better maternal and infant health outcomes.”

The bill will circulate for co-sponsorship until March 17<sup>th</sup>.

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