



Arkansas Center for Nursing  
 Arkansas Association of Nurse Anesthetists  
 Arkansas Nurse Practitioner Association  
 Arkansas Nurses Association  
 Arkansas Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
 Northeast Arkansas Advanced Practice Association

## Improving Care Delivery with Signature Authority

**Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs)** are nurses:

- Prepared with advanced specialized education and clinical competency to provide healthcare for diverse populations in a variety of settings.
- Educated and certified in clinical specialties and special population roles:
  - Nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, clinical nurse specialists, and certified registered nurse anesthetists.

**Signature Authority:** Authorizes APRNs to complete the signatures necessary on healthcare forms

- Forms need to be signed to fill orders, make referrals, document care given.
- Some state laws prohibit healthcare companies to accept an APRNs signature on the forms.
- Care has been provided; a physician signature is required to complete the agency form.

**Barriers caused by APRNs lack of authorization to sign healthcare provider forms:**

- Requiring two health care providers' involvement to sign, stamp, certify, or endorse one patient care form costs the health care system in terms of **lost productivity**, and in some cases, **fees transferred between providers** to meet outdated signature requirements.
- **Significant delays** in everyday care, for patients and providers.
- **Dangerous delays** in events that are time-sensitive or of critical importance.

**Advantages of changing Arkansas law allowing APRNs signature authority:**

- **Increases patient access, reduce costs, and promote efficient, timely** care without delays.
- Promotes **transparency of care**: APRNs will provide patient care and sign their own care documentation.
- Reduces **unnecessary follow-up visits** simply because the signature blank on the paperwork is outdated.
- Promotes **patient choice** of provider to complete forms related to their care.
- **Does not expand scope of practice** for APRNs; it simply allows them to sign paperwork that reflects the care they have already provided within their individual scope of practice.

**Examples of these important signature authority activities include signing:**

- certifications of disability for patients to receive disabled parking permits from DMV
- sports physicals for student athletes to participate in football, cheerleading, or other activities;
- forms related to end-of-life care;
- forms excusing a potential jury member due to illness;
- signing worker's compensation forms for employees injured on the job;
- documentation of health need for utilities to remain on despite delayed payment

**Major Healthcare Policy Organizations recommend APRNs receive Signature Authority:**

- The Institute of Medicine



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- National Governors Association
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- The Federal Trade Commission.

**Arkansas Organizations that support Signature Authority for APRNs in Arkansas:**

- Arkansas Homecare and Hospice Association
- AARP Arkansas
- Arkansas Department of Health (employ many APRNs)