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NURSES CALL FOR ACTION ON TAXWATCH REPORT

Lawmakers should give nurse practitioners pivotal roles in patient care, cost savings

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Nurses Association (FNA) today called for lawmakers to act on the recommendations of a new report that shows nurse practitioners can provide high-quality patient care while saving health care dollars.

A report by Florida TaxWatch states that Florida can save \$339 million across all health care systems, including Medicaid, by giving advanced degree professionals the ability to write prescriptions independently and bill insurance plans directly.

“With more people entering Florida’s Medicaid program, lawmakers must consider new ways to deliver health care services while maintaining quality patient care,” said FNA Executive Director Willa Fuller. “Nurse practitioners have the skills and training needed to provide high-quality primary care services to patients at a lower cost.”

By giving nurse practitioners the ability to provide primary care services – and to bill insurance plans directly at rates lower than those charged by doctors – Florida can literally save millions of dollars and avoid painful cuts to other health programs, Fuller said. Lawmakers must eliminate legislative and administrative barriers to make that happen, she said.

Unlike their counterparts in 48 other states, nurse practitioners in Florida cannot write prescriptions for medications made of substances listed by the federal government as Schedule II controlled substances.

Florida’s nurse practitioners cannot prescribe medications commonly used by expectant mothers during labor, children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, terminally ill individuals in hospice, or by patients in nursing homes and veterans’ hospitals. These prescriptions can only be written by physicians, which bill at a higher rate than nurse practitioners for their services.

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The FNA is the state organization that represents nurses of all specialty and practice areas. For more information, please visit us at www.floridanurse.org.

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