

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NURSE PRACTITIONERS

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March 12, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As President of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP), I read with great interest (and anticipation) that you were convening the White House Summit on Health Care. However, when the Summit was held on Thursday, March 5, the 125,000 nurse practitioners (NPs) in the United States were not represented at the table during this important discussion and for that, I am truly disappointed and puzzled. While you did have the American Nurses Association at the table, they are not the national organization representing NPs.

NPs are well-established licensed independent practitioners who practice in ambulatory, acute, and long-term care as primary and/or specialty care providers. They provide nursing and medical care to their patients. In addition to diagnosing and managing acute and chronic illnesses, NPs emphasize health promotion and disease prevention. They practice autonomously and in collaboration with other health care providers. Entry-level preparation for NPs is at the graduate level. The autonomous nature of the NP's advanced clinical practice requires accountability for health care outcomes.

Since access to primary care is of utmost importance to all Americans, it is important that you know that by not having NPs at the Summit, you were leaving out a group of exceptional providers of primary (and acute) care. The majority of NPs practice in primary care, thus significantly increasing access to high quality health care. While there remains a definite problem in availability to primary care, to ignore NPs as a group of providers does a disservice to the American public who are looking to you for answers.

For over 40 years, research has proven that NP delivered health care produces excellent outcomes and that NP care is at least equivalent to that of physician care. The studies have investigated the outcomes of NP practice for patients with chronic, complex problems, as well as acute episodic conditions that are treated in primary care offices. They provide evidence that NPs are expert in developing ongoing relationships with their patients and partnering with their patients to ensure individualized, patient-centered care.

As the largest national organization for NPs of all specialties, representing the interests of the more than 125,000 NPs in the country, AANP has extensive and comprehensive research data regarding NPs and their practice. We would welcome the opportunity to work with you as a resource and to be included in future health care discussions.

Sincerely,



Diana "Dee" Swanson, MSN, NP-C, FAANP
President