

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NURSE PRACTITIONERS

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April 4, 2008

Letter to the Editor of the Wall Street Journal:

Your article: *Making Room for "Dr. Nurse"* that ran in the Wall Street Journal on April 2, 2008 provided a highly inaccurate coverage of the issues surrounding nurse practitioners (NPs), the doctor of nursing practice (DNP) degree, and the proposed DNP certification examination. Ms. Landros failed to incorporate the information on these issues that she obtained through a series of phone interviews with individuals from the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP). This resulted in biased, rather than comprehensive, coverage of the topic.

As Ms. Landros was informed, there are approximately 125,000 NPs in the U.S. providing a combination of nursing and medical services to the patients they serve. With over 600 million visits annually, NPs contribute substantially to making access to high quality and personalized healthcare a reality.

A statement that the DNP could be raising the bar too high for the profession is inaccurate. The DNP presents a normal evolution of our discipline and is based on the reality that master's-level NP programs have already expanded to incorporate all of the necessary clinical content to the point that they are more equivalent to a doctorate than a master's degree. Certainly there is no indication that the move to the DNP is based on evidence that a significant increase in clinical content or credentialing is necessary to prepare NPs for practice.

As we discussed with Ms. Landros, AANP is not supportive of plans for an added layer of certification for DNPs at this time, particularly one that would involve the profession of medicine. It is inappropriate for one profession to credential or regulate another, as this is clearly in the purview of nursing. Moreover, there exist a number of psychometrically sound NP national certification examinations. These NP national certification examinations are based on comprehensive assessments of NP practice and will be adapted to reflect future practice of the certificants.

In the spirit of fair and balanced reporting, we hope that you will consider an article devoted to informing your vast readership about the NP role, as it has evolved to answer the need for access to high quality healthcare. We believe that your readership would find the emergence and growth of this group of highly qualified healthcare providers over the past 43 years fascinating. AANP has extensive and comprehensive research data regarding NPs and their practice, as well as lists of additional resources on these topics. We would welcome the opportunity to work with you as a resource on this in the near future.

Sincerely,

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