The American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) advocates that nurse practitioners (NPs) have unrestricted prescriptive authority, including dispensing privileges, within their scope of practice.

Nurse practitioners are independently licensed, advanced practice registered nurses who have advanced training and education that prepare them to work in the NP role. Nurse practitioners have graduate education in pharmacology, pathophysiology, physical assessment, and clinical diagnosis and treatment that prepares them to diagnose and prescribe medications and treatments. Nurse practitioners make both independent and coordinated care decisions about the health care needs of individuals, families, and groups across the life span.

Five decades of research concludes that nurse practitioners provide safe, cost-effective, high-quality health care. Prescribing medications, devices, treatments, and modalities is a central component of the NP role and essential to practitioner practice. Restrictions on prescriptive authority unnecessarily limit the ability of nurse practitioners to provide comprehensive health care services.

AANP recommends that NP prescribing authority be solely regulated by state boards of nursing, and in accordance with the NP role, education and certification. This process of license and regulation exclusively by the nursing board promotes public safety and competent practice. Nurse practitioners serve as members of state boards of nursing and are competent to appropriately regulate nurse practitioner prescribing. AANP advocates that nurse practitioners be nationally certified.

The ability of nurse practitioners to prescribe, without restriction, legend and controlled medications, devices, health care services, durable medical equipment, and other equipment and supplies is essential to providing cost-effective, quality health care for the diverse populations they serve across the life span.

Resources: