



SB 5704: Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners (ARNPs) Deserve Equitable Reimbursement

“The COVID-19 pandemic’s devastating impact has heightened our need for primary, specialty and behavioral health providers. Across our state, particularly in rural and underserved areas, the need for advanced registered nurse practitioners (ARNPs) has never been higher. Many people in our communities need vaccines, others have delayed health screenings and preventive care, and still others are experiencing greater mental health needs.”

– **Dr. Benjamin Danielson, for *The Seattle Times***

Private health insurers have arbitrarily reduced reimbursement for ARNP services down to just 85% of their usual rates. Health care practices that are owned by or employ ARNPs are threatened by these cuts, just when our communities especially need their services.

ARNPs are integral to our healthcare system.

- Washington deserves a high-functioning health system, and ARNPs are essential to assuring we all get quality, timely care.
- ARNPs are highly educated and have full prescriptive authority. They are nurse practitioners, certified registered nurse anesthetists, nurse midwives, and clinical nurse specialists working in a wide range of healthcare settings. Some own their own primary care or behavior health practices, others work in hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers and physician owned practices.
- Washington’s Medicaid recipients depend on ARNPs. Health clinics need a balanced “payor-mix” to help off-set the lower Medicaid rate, and low income, diverse communities are hurt when practices have to reduce the number of Medicaid clients served due to insurer cuts in ARNP reimbursement.

ARNPs PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF VITAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES: PRIMARY CARE, SPECIALTY CARE, PSYCHIATRIC & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, MIDWIFERY AND ANESTHESIOLOGY.

NEARLY HALF OF WASHINGTON’S MEDICAID RECIPIENTS GET THEIR CARE FROM ARNPs.

PASSING SB 5704 WILL:

- CREATE FINANCIAL STABILITY FOR THE HEALTHCARE PRACTICES THAT ARE OWNED BY OR EMPLOY ARNPs.
- ENSURE WASHINGTON RESIDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO A ROBUST NETWORK OF ARNP SERVICES AND CAN GET THE CARE THEY NEED.

The arbitrary reduction in ARNP reimbursement harms patients.

- Washington is confronting a crisis in access to health care. Reimbursing by provider rather than service makes it harder for Washington residents to access healthcare services.
- The harm is especially acute in rural areas, which are disproportionately dependent on ARNPs for health care services.
- Healthcare practices that are owned by or employ ARNPs, including those owned by physicians and health systems, are being forced to reduce the services they offer, limit the types of insurance they accept and, in some cases, even close their doors. Washington residents are finding it harder to get in to see a health provider when they need care, sometimes waiting for months.
- Reimbursement of ARNP services at 100% of the standard service rate will help sustain community practices owned by ARNPs, physicians, and health systems that care for the health and well-being of patients throughout our state.

CRNAs serve 93% of rural hospitals – in 72% of rural facilities they are the sole anesthesia providers.

Inequities in reimbursement rates lead to inequities in care.

Right now, we need to be protecting access to health care in every county in Washington. Passing SB 5704 is a crucial component in the state's efforts to improve primary care and behavioral health access in some of our most vulnerable communities.

The benefits of SB5704 are exemplified in Oregon, which passed a similar law in 2013.

This bill does two important things:

- It requires insurance companies to follow the lead of the state Medicaid program and L&I and reimburse ARNP services at 100% of the standard service rate.
- It explicitly requires that insurance companies NOT reduce their reimbursement to physicians in order to comply.

Passing SB 5704 will:

- Create financial stability for the healthcare practices that are owned by or employ ARNPs, including practices owned by physicians and health systems.
- Ensure Washington residents have access to a robust network of ARNP services and can get the care they need close to home without unnecessary delays.

AAPPN is proud to join ARNPs United and other health care organizations in support of this bill.

Ask your legislators to support SB5704 today!