

Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners Act 48

HB 1253, PN 2296

Sponsor: Rep. Solobay

Date Enacted: July 20, 2007

Summary:

Act 48 expands the scope of practice for Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners (CRNP) to allow them to practice to the fullest extent of their education and training by removing barriers to practice in specific cases where CRNP's are capable of providing services currently reserved only for physicians.

Prior Law:

Under Section 8.3 of the Professional Nursing Law of May 22, 1951 (P.L. 317, No. 69), CRNPs could only prescribe and dispense drugs listed in 49 Pa. Code 21.284. They were also subject to dosage limits when prescribing controlled substances in Schedules II – IV. 49 Pa. Code 21.287 set the number of CRNPs with prescriptive authority that a physician could supervise at four.

Analysis:

Act 48 expands the scope of practice for certified registered nurse practitioners (CRNPs) to allow them to:

- (1) order home health and hospice care,
- (2) order durable medical equipment,
- (3) issue oral orders according to a health facility's guidelines,
- (4) make referrals for physical therapy and dietitian services,
- (5) make referrals for respiratory or occupational therapy,
- (6) perform disability assessments for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF),
- (7) perform and sign initial methadone treatment evaluations,
- (8) issue home-bound schooling certifications.

These expansions do not restrict the authority of a facility in determining its own regulations on scope of practice within that facility.

The bill also mandates that CRNP's carry the same level of professional liability insurance required of physicians performing similar healthcare services.

Impact:

By expanding the scope of practice and prescriptive authority of CRNPs, more patients can receive care by qualified professionals in a shorter amount of time. This allows CRNPs to practice to the full extent of their education and training, and frees up physicians to focus on more complicated cases. As part of the package of scope of practice bills under Governor Rendell's Prescription for Pennsylvania, this will increase the overall efficiency of the healthcare system. Studies show that adding a CRNP to a medical practice can double the number of patients seen, while maintaining the same level of quality of care.

Effective Date: 60 days from enactment