

# The veterans health affairs handbook

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The Veterans Health Affairs Handbook This article presents a letter that addresses the draft Veterans Health Affairs (VHA) Handbook 1180. 03: VHA Nursing Handbook, which would mandate that all advanced practice nurses (APRNs) within the VHA to operate as independent providers, without regard to state practice acts (“ Texas Medical Association” 1). Ideally, the letter opposes the draft VHA Handbook with a view that the proposed changes may significantly undermine the delivery of care within the VHA while disregarding the states’ role in regulating the health and safety of their residents in the delivery of health care services (“ Texas Medical Association” 1). I strongly agree with the letter in calling for the revision of the draft VHA Nursing Handbook.

As a medical student, I am aware of the growing demand for better health care in our country. This calls for more physicians and nurses as well as coordination of the two groups in offering health care, which is now prone to health care workforce problems. As such, I disregard the draft VHA Nursing Handbook that seeks to eliminate physician-led, team-based care within the VHA system since this will also prevent local facilities from providing such services thus jeopardizing primary health care. Moreover, I differ with medical practitioners who advocate for the independent use of nurses instead of physicians to address the health care workforce shortages since this will put the lives of most patients at a greater risk. Indeed, I think the best way to address these problems is to hire more staff and enhance integration and teamwork among all health care providers with a view of offering affordable and effective health care. Nevertheless, the draft VHA Nursing Handbook negates this approach as it fosters fragmentation in this sector.

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Therefore, I think we should revise the draft VHA Nursing Handbook to reflect a team-based approach that will allow all parties in health care delivery to work together, share decisions and information to enhance healthcare delivery. Indeed, by enhancing integration and teamwork between VHA and physicians and APRNs, this draft would address fundamental challenges in health delivery. Furthermore, the draft should seek to offer longer-term solutions in the healthcare workforce instead of the questionable short-term measures it offers now. With these recommendations, I bet a revision of the draft VHA Nursing Handbook would suit the current healthcare needs. I thereby support the views contained in the letter.

#### Works Cited

Texas Medical Association. Letter Opposing APNs Practicing Independently in Veteran's System, 2013. Web. 7 February 2014. < <http://www.texmed.org/Template.aspx?id=29416> > .