



Florida Services
Chapter



FL Advocate Newsletter

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As the 2020 Florida Legislative Session begins, Speaker Oliva has declared an all-out assault on the medical profession. It is with great audacity that he persists in the erroneous belief that allied health professionals, physician assistants and nurse practitioners should have independent practice and are the equivalent of doctors. While these mid-level providers are important members of the medical team, it is imperative that this team is led by physicians who have the highest level of training and experience to manage the healthcare of the patients under their care. As members of the American College of Physicians, we know that physicians require a minimum of four years of medical school, followed by a residency program of between three and five years, depending on the field. If a physician chooses to specialize, it may require an additional four or more years of training. These programs are standardized by an accrediting body to ensure the quality of the training for the medical profession. Additionally, most physicians become board certified and have to spend countless hours of continuing medical education to maintain this certification over their careers.

By contrast, a nurse practitioner can go from registered nurse to ARNP in as little as 12 months, with online courses and no standardization for their training. It is disingenuous and false for anyone to conclude that the ARNP is equivalent to a physician. The notion that the ARNP is being somehow limited by having physician supervision is both a false narrative and dangerous for patient care. Quite simply, patients expect and deserve a physician leading their health care team.

Your Florida Chapter of the American College of Physicians is the largest single specialty organization, representing Internal Medicine and the subspecialties. The Florida Chapter is committed to opposing this egregious attempt by Speaker Oliva to devalue the medical profession and persist in the false narrative that the Nurse Practitioners are not being allowed to practice appropriately. They are a valuable part of the medical team, but the facts show that they do not have the training necessary to be independent. If they had the training, they would be physicians and have gone to medical school. I urge every physician to express their concern to their State Representatives and Senators regarding this attempt to make nurse practitioners and midlevel providers independent as this will endanger patients, decrease the quality of care in the State of Florida and set a dangerous precedent for the future of healthcare in this State. It is imperative that all physicians become involved in the advocacy process, maintain your membership in our organization and speak out when our profession is threatened and our patients are endangered.

I want to personally thank our staff and lobbyists who are working diligently to monitor and challenge the issues that face us in the legislative process. The session has just begun and it will continue to evolve over the next several weeks. Please continue to read these legislative updates and be involved. As it is said, the best way for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.