



ISSUE SPOTLIGHT: BREAKING DOWN HEALTH CARE BARRIERS

Floridians are tired of special interests keeping them from more affordable and accessible health care options. **HB 607** and **HB 711** offer two policy solutions to chip away at those walls and expand market-based care. Here's what they do*:

HB 607 (Pigman) ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES: allows advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) to practice autonomously within their scope of practice.

- Florida has a shortage of health care providers. As of Sept. 30, 2019, there are 278 primary care health professional shortage areas.¹
- There are 28,734 APRNs active in Florida² – all with graduate degrees – trained to diagnose and treat illness and disease, yet they are stifled in their ability to help patients by the current state law that requires physician supervision.
- This bill would bring Florida in line with 22³ other states that already allow APRNs to help people by practicing independently. Treatment by an APRN is just as safe as treatment by a physician.⁴ In fact, allowing certified nurse practitioners to work without physician supervision can improve health outcomes.⁵
- Many experienced APRNs are “supervised” by physicians who never see the APRN’s patients, never review a chart, and never do a patient consultation. Yet, many physicians charge these nurses money to sign their required supervision paperwork.
- HB 607 removes outdated barriers to health care access by allowing APRNs to help patients to the full extent of their education and training, and offer health care services in areas affected by physician shortages.
- **Status as of December 10, 2019:** *On Health Quality Subcommittee agenda for Dec. 11.*

HB 711 (Burton) HOSPITAL, HOSPITAL SYSTEM, OR PROVIDER ORGANIZATION

TRANSACTIONS: requires a review of hospital acquisitions of physician practices for anticompetitive behavior by Attorney General’s Office. Any hospital planning to acquire a physician practice must report it to the Attorney General at least 90 days prior to completion.

- Hospital control of many providers in one area reduces competition and raises costs.
- On average, prices increase by 14.1% when a hospital acquires a physician practice. For specialty physician practice acquisitions, prices increase 15% to 33.5%.⁶
- To preserve and ensure a free and fair market, mergers and acquisitions should be monitored.
- This bill authorizes the Attorney General’s Anti-Trust Division to look out for anticompetitive behavior and act accordingly to prevent harmful monopolies.
- This policy is the best solution to prevent mergers and acquisitions leading to unfair, anticompetitive markets that increase health care costs and reduce access.
- **Status as of December 10, 2019:** *On Health Market Reform Subcommittee agenda for Dec. 11.*

*Please refer to bill texts and analyses for additional information.

¹ Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas, Kaiser Family Foundation, available at <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/primary-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

² Florida Department of Health, Division of Medical Quality Assurance, Annual Report and Long Range Plan, Fiscal Year 201-2019, available at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/licensing-and-regulation/reports-and-publications/index.html>

³ State Practice Environment, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, available at <https://www.aanp.org/advocacy/state/state-practice-environment>

⁴ Laurant, M., et al., The Cochrane Collaboration, “Substitution of doctors by nurses in primary care,” October 18, 2004, abstract available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15846614>;

⁵ Udalova, V., Traczynski, J., “Nurse Practitioner Independence, Health Care Utilization, and Health Outcomes,” May 4, 2014, available at http://www2.hawaii.edu/~jtraczyn/paperdraft_050414_ASHE.pdf

⁶ Capps, C., et al., The Effect of Hospital Acquisitions of Physician Practices on Prices and Spending, January 12, 2017, available at <https://economics.mit.edu/files/12747>