



Scope of Practice Kit: Addendum A

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The Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, *Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* calls for improving the education of nurses and enabling them to work to the full extent of their training and expertise. The nursing workforce is critical to effective primary care and community health, but their training and expertise is not equal to that of a primary care physician.

- The IOM focuses a disproportionate amount of the report on expanding the scope of practice for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN). Physicians and nurses are not interchangeable, and optimal patient care is achieved when physicians, nurses, and other health professionals work together as a team in roles that do not exceed the full level of their training and experience.
- While nurses provide important primary care services, the curriculum of doctor of nursing programs require only 30 to 40 additional credit hours beyond a master's degree. This requirement does not equate the 12,000 to 16,000 hours of primary care physician clinical training and the professions should not be considered equal or interchangeable.
- By focusing much of the report on the APRN workforce, the IOM misses an opportunity to make valuable recommendations that address the physician and nursing workforces that care for most Americans in primary care settings. Our health care system needs more primary care physicians and more nurses, but the report fails to address these shortages.
- The report recommends that scope of practice barriers be removed, which would allow nurses to practice medicine with no limitations or parameters for safeguarding the public. The IOM does not offer a required minimum number of supervised clinical hours, or documented favorable performance appraisals that must be achieved in order for a nurse to practice as this report recommends.
- The act of caring for people is too important to use a political process to increase scope of practice. Scope of practice should be based on training and competency, and public policies should promote the recruitment, training, and retention of more primary care physicians, nurses, and physician assistants.