

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 5, 2015

The Honorable Robert A. McDonald
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
801 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald:

We support the work being done in the Veterans Administration (VA) to respond to the increasing healthcare demands of our Veterans by updating the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Nursing Handbook. Our understanding it that the VA is considering granting Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) recognition as full practice providers in the VHA. This designation would help improve veterans' access to the high quality healthcare they have earned.

APRNs are highly skilled practitioners with expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of illness and the delivery of evidence-based nursing interventions. APRNs include Nurse Practitioners, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, Certified Nurse Midwives, and Clinical Nurse Specialists. As full practice providers, APRNs will provide care to the full scope of their education and skills giving the VHA greater flexibility to utilize all providers within the healthcare team, maximize existing resources, and improve access to high quality care. Decades of research have shown that APRNs provide safe, high quality healthcare in all settings and with all patient populations. This proposal is consistent with the evidenced-based recommendations advanced by the Institute of Medicine in its report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, and will allow for greater team-based clinical practice.

We commend your commitment to improving access to exceptional services in the VHA and believe granting APRNs recognition as full practice providers is an important step toward achieving this goal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



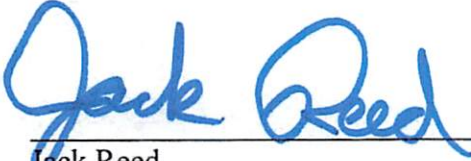
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United States Senator



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United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
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Jack Reed
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