

National Nurse Practitioner Organizations Express Concern Over Department of Education Negotiated Rulemaking

The undersigned organizations, representing the 461,000 nurse practitioners (NPs) in the United States, are deeply concerned with the Department of Education (DOE) negotiated rulemaking through the Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE) Committee. The negotiators and the Department agreed to a definition of ‘professional degree’ which would prohibit NPs from being eligible for higher federal student loan limits. This change would have a detrimental impact on the health care workforce.

NPs are advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) who are prepared at the masters or doctoral level to provide primary, acute, chronic and specialty care to patients of all ages and backgrounds. NPs perform nearly one billion patient visits annually. According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), as of 2024, there were over 243,000 NPs billing for Medicare services, making NPs the largest Medicare designated provider specialty,¹ and approximately 80% of NPs are seeing Medicare and Medicaid patients.² This proposal will deter future students from careers as NPs and does not acknowledge the urgent need for access to care across the country. Restricting NP student access to professional loans will have a direct and damaging impact on patient access to health care.

Individuals with a passion for providing care to their community should not be deterred from their career aspirations because of an overly restrictive definition. We call on the Department to amend its definition to ensure that NP programs are recognized as professional degree programs and that NP students have access to education and financial support to continue to serve their communities.

American Association of Nurse Practitioners

Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association

National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties

¹ <https://www.cms.gov/files/zip/cy-2026-pfs-proposed-rule-specialty-impacts-practitioner.zip>

² https://storage.aanp.org/www/documents/NP_Infographic.pdf