

Scope of Practice: Myth vs. Fact

MYTH	VS	FACT
Changes to scope of practice expand patient access to care.		While the number of nurse practitioners doubled between 2010-2017, there has been no noticeable increase of nurse practitioners within rural, underserved areas. CMS data and countless state examples show nurse practitioners tend to practice in the same areas of the state as physicians, irrespective of state scope of practice laws.
Patients welcome scope of practice changes.		Sixty-eight percent of U.S. voters say it is very important to them for a physician to be involved in diagnosis and treatment decisions. Patients want and expect a physician to be present on their care team.
Scope of practice changes would decrease health care costs.		Studies from the Mayo Clinic and JAMA found nurse practitioners and physician assistants are more likely to make unnecessary referrals and imaging orders, resulting in higher costs for patients
Patients are the primary beneficiaries of scope of practice changes.		By allowing increased scope expansions, lawmakers are allowing for-profit entities to shape our health care system – regardless of what patients want – while also reducing patient choice in who provides their care. While some procedures seem simple and uncomplicated, there are too many examples of practitioners with less education and training having bad outcomes that harm patients for the rest of their lives. Studies from the Mayo Clinic and JAMA found nurse practitioners and physician assistants are more likely to make unnecessary referrals and imaging orders, resulting in higher costs for patients. While the number of nurse practitioners doubled between 2010-2017, there has been no noticeable increase of nurse practitioners within rural areas for those patients who are underserved.

It's clear, patients benefit least from changes to scope of practice.