

PNP Prescriptive Privilege

The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) advocates that nurse practitioners have unlimited prescriptive authority and dispensing privileges within their scope of practice.

NAPNAP affirms that the pediatric nurse practitioner (PNP) has specialized knowledge and skills. PNPs are advanced practice registered nurses who provide health care to infants, children, and young adults. PNPs have completed a formal educational program specializing in pediatric health care and have met their State Board's regulations that govern advanced practice nursing (NAPNAP, 2003). PNP educational programs prepare the advanced practice nurse for pediatric primary care practice, pediatric specialty practice, independent clinical decision-making, and clinical scholarship. PNP education includes a comprehensive foundation, including advanced pathophysiology, pharmacology, prevention and management of pediatric problems/illnesses, and chronic conditions (AFPNP, 1996). Countless studies have demonstrated that nurse practitioners have been providing safe, cost-effective health care, including prescribing medications, for years (Erickson, 2000; Mitchell-Dicenso et al.; 1996; Moody et al.; 1999; Munding, 2000; Safriet, 1992; Safriet, 1998; & Sakr, et. al., 1999).

NAPNAP advocates for:

1. Unlimited prescriptive authority for PNPs, to include legend and controlled medications, medical devices, durable medical goods, equipment, and supplies.
2. The prescribing PNP's name printed on the prescription order pad and the prescription bottle with any inquiries regarding the prescription directed to the prescribing PNP.
3. The ability for all PNPs to independently receive and distribute medication samples.
4. Clarification of the language in all states' Nurse Practice Acts and amendments to clearly and specifi-

cally include diagnosis, treatment, and prescriptive authority in the nurse practitioner's scope of practice.

5. All PNPs to obtain continuing education in pediatric pharmacology on a regular basis.

Prescribing medications is essential to the PNP's practice. The ability of PNPs to prescribe, without limitation, enhances patient care by promoting greater continuity of care, saving time for both the patient and the health care providers, increasing cost effectiveness, and increasing safety and accountability. A clearly defined scope of practice, allowing for full prescriptive privileges, will allow PNPs to provide comprehensive services to children and their families, thus improving access to health care.

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