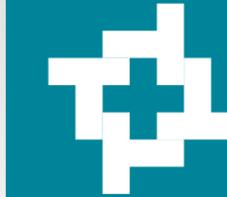




# NO TO NURSE INDEPENDENT PRACTICE



## TMA Holds the Line on Team-Based Healthcare Delivery

A small segment of advance practice nurses, mostly academicians, again in 2016 tried to push legislation through the Tennessee General Assembly that would have given APRNs the legal authority to practice independently, without any physician oversight.

TMA fought the legislation, offering lawmakers an alternative bill that would provide an updated framework for collaborative, team-based healthcare delivery.

While APRNs argued that independent practice would be a remedy for primary care shortages in rural areas of the state, TMA raised broader concerns about too much autonomy jeopardizing patient safety and quality of care. The best solution, said TMA physicians, is collaborative care agreements that draw upon the strengths of each team member and enable all providers to practice to the extent of their education, training and experience.

Proponents of independent practice pulled their bill in favor of another bill that created a scope of practice task force. The law called for an equally balanced group of advance practice nurse and physician representatives to further explore scope of practice issues during the summer, develop viable solutions and make a recommendation to the legislature for consideration in 2017. TMA supported the task force bill as a potential avenue for compromise.

After several meetings, presentations and a barrage of email correspondence, however, the task force did not produce a consensus proposal for lawmakers to consider on scope of practice or access to care. It was clear from the beginning that certain task force members would not be satisfied with anything other than nurse independent practice. The task force will make a few suggestions for legislators to consider in the 2017 session, including increasing funding for enforcing physician supervision rules.

TMA will continue advocating for policies that improve and strengthen interprofessional relationships, not weaken them, and help ensure Tennessee's physician oversight structure is working as intended.



Read more about TMA's vision for physician-led, team-based healthcare at [tnmed.org/teambasedcare](http://tnmed.org/teambasedcare).

## Physician Representation on Scope of Practice Task Force

TMA recommended several physicians to serve on Sen. Becky Massey's task force in 2016 and is grateful to these members for their participation.

- **John Daniel, DO** – internist in Johnson City and former nurse practitioner
- **John Hale, MD** – family physician in Union City, TMA President 2015-2016, co-chair of scope of practice task force
- **Joey Hensley, MD** – family physician in Hohenwald and member of the Tennessee Senate
- **Ken Moore, MD** – Mayor of the City of Franklin, Tenn.
- **Manish Sethi, MD** – orthopedist in Nashville
- **Nita W. Shumaker, MD** – pediatrician in Chattanooga, TMA President-Elect 2016-2017
- **Jeff Stevens, MD** – family physician in Knoxville
- **Jerome Thompson, MD** – ENT specialist in Memphis and chair of TMA Membership Committee

## What is nurse independent practice?

Also called “full practice authority,” independent practice gives nurses the legal authority to treat and diagnose patients, prescribe medication, order tests, manage chronic illnesses and deliver other healthcare services, including those currently reserved for physicians, without physician supervision, oversight or collaboration. Tennessee is one of 33 states requiring physician supervision.

## Key Legislators on Scope of Practice Task Force

While the physician-to-nurse ratio on the task force was intentionally even, three out of the four legislators who participated leaned heavily toward APRNs.

- **Sen. Joey Hensley, MD** (R – Hohenwald) – one of six physician legislators in the General Assembly, Sen. Hensley stands firmly opposed to nurse independent practice
- **Sen. Becky Massey** (R – Knoxville) – Senate sponsor of nurse independent practice and task force bills
- **Rep. Jeremy Faison** (R – Cosby) – House sponsor of task force bill and previous nurse independent practice bills
- **Rep. Joanne Favors** (D – Chattanooga) – retired nurse and key supporter of APRN efforts toward independent practice

## Practice of Medicine ≠ Practice of Nursing

The debate over independent practice in Tennessee has been mischaracterized as a plea from APRNs to practice to the full extent of their education and training. The fact is they are already doing that; current state laws do not prevent APRNs from performing APRN duties. Proponents of independent practice want to practice beyond the extent of their education and training and have license to do what physicians do, without going through medical school, residency training, etc.