



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Sen. Krueger Announces Passage of New Law Recognizing Clinical Nurse Specialists in New York State

LIZ KRUEGER October 2, 2013

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Sen. Krueger today announced the enactment of her legislation recognizing and establishing a certification for “clinical nurse specialists” in New York State. The new law was sponsored by Sen. Krueger and Assemblymember Barbara Lifton (D-Ithaca), and signed by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo late last Friday.

As technological and organizational innovations continue in healthcare, the clinical nurse specialist (CNS) has evolved as an advanced-practice nursing role, with a distinct and crucial place in numerous medical settings. Over the last 50 years, 38 states have legally recognized the CNS role.

With the healthcare environment growing increasingly complex, there is an emerging consensus that nurses’ role in care should be expanded “to the full extent of their education and training,” as a 2010 report from the Institute of Medicine and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation stated. Title protection for clinical nurse specialists will help New York’s healthcare systems make full use of this advanced-practice nursing role while protecting the public and ensuring that CNS practitioners are properly trained and qualified.

“Specialized nursing professionals are taking on an increasingly crucial role in 21st century healthcare,” said Sen. Krueger. “State recognition and certification for clinical nurse specialists will ensure that these advanced-practice nurses are properly integrated into all healthcare settings, improving quality of care and patient outcomes.”

“Research shows that clinical nurse specialists, as experts in specialized areas of nursing practice, provide benefits to patients and hospitals, including reduced hospital costs and length of stay, reduced frequency of emergency room visits, improved pain management practices, increased patient satisfaction with nursing care, and reduced medical complications in hospitalized patients,” Assemblymember Lifton explained.

In modern healthcare settings, CNS practitioners play an essential role in providing high quality, evidence-based care, and they function in a wide range of specialty areas including oncology, pediatrics, geriatrics, psychiatric/mental health, adult health, critical care and community, health. The CNS role includes:

- Direct care to complex patients
- Mentoring and consultation to nursing staff
- Research
- Management and systems improvements

All of these functions are geared toward optimizing the use of evidence-based practices and improved patient outcomes.

Competencies for CNS practice have been established and validated nationally, and peer-reviewed literature has established that CNS practice produces better patient outcomes with fewer complications. Protecting the CNS title will help healthcare delivery settings in New York effectively utilize CNS practitioners while ensuring that only properly educated and qualified advanced-practice nurses are performing CNS services.

This new law will also help ensure that unqualified individuals do not present themselves as CNS, and it authorizes the State Education Department to investigate claims of unlicensed practice.

This legislation was signed as Chapter 364 of the Laws of 2013 on September 27, 2013. It was carried in the Senate and Assembly as S3145 and A826, respectively.