

RESOLUTION 214

Doctor of Nursing Practice

- No one can debate the obvious shortages in primary care physicians. Over the last five years, medical school graduates entering family practice has dropped from 14% to 8%. Only 25% of internal medicine now go into office based practice.
- More than 200 nursing schools are beginning programs to educate nursing students with skills allegedly equivalent to primary care physicians and these nursing are receiving a degree called the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP).
- According to some reports, by the year 2015, the DNP program will be recognized by the accrediting body of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), which oversees schools that offer advanced degrees to nurse-practitioners such as, nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), clinical nurse specialists and nurse midwives.
- Additionally, the National Board of Medical Examiners is developing a voluntary DNP certification exam based on the same exams given to medical doctors to obtain their license. NBME's actions attempt to lend credibility to the DNP and will only further confuse patients on who is the medical doctor.
- The DNP's are being marketed as being trained to have more focus than doctors on coordinating care with specialists and healthcare settings.
- By calling these DNP's "Doctor" confuses the public with a physician that attended medical school versus a nurse with an advanced degree and potentially jeopardizes care.
- These nurse practitioners lack the appropriate training with regard to even basic pathophysiology to make proper diagnostic and treatment decisions.
- These DNP programs cannot replace the primary care physician as the gate keepers of medicine. These DNP programs cannot educate a nurse in three years to what takes a physician 5-7 years of education.
- A solution for the primary care shortage is to increase the number of primary care residency slots in each state which will preserve the quality of care that is needed for patients.
- Important statistics regarding GA
 1. GA ranks 44th in the nation for its ratio of primary care physicians to the population. If no changes occur with residency slots, GA will rank last in this ratio.
 2. GA ranks 42nd in the nation in its supply of RNs and will need an additional 20,000 nurses by 2012.
 3. It is estimated that GA will need at least 200 new residency slots by 2020 and 2,000 additional residents to meet the healthcare needs of the state.