

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. Senate Bill 25

PRINTER NO. 1797

AMOUNT

See Fiscal Impact

FUND

General Fund

DATE INTRODUCED

March 3, 2023

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Bartolotta

DESCRIPTION

Senate Bill 25 amends the Professional Nursing Law to provide for rural certified registered nurse practitioners.

This legislation establishes the Rural Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners Health Care Access Program (program) to allow an eligible rural Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (CRNP) to practice as an independent primary healthcare practitioner without a written or collaborative agreement with a physician in a rural area. A rural area is defined as a county with a population density of fewer than 291 people per square mile based on the 2020 census or a county as specifically designated.

The bill sets eligibility requirements for a rural CRNP to participate in the program. A CRNP must hold a current license to practice in the Commonwealth and must have received no disciplinary action or have no pending disciplinary action within the preceding five years. An eligible CRNP must have been engaged in the practice of professional nursing pursuant to a collaborative or written agreement with a physician for at least three years and at least 3,600 hours. The collaborative practice must have occurred within the prior five years. To participate, a CRNP must apply to the State Board of Nursing, pay a fee established by the board and attest that the criteria required by the law is met. An application shall be issued within 30 days.

The legislation requires biennial renewal of the license for the CRNP and the completion of ten hours of continuing education to continue to participate in the program. The ten hours of continuing education is in addition the continuing education required for a CRNP license.

The bill requires a CRNP to comply with the requirements of law and standard of advanced nursing care and recognize limitations in knowledge and experience. A CRNP must wear a name identification badge showing the professional title and must inform patients of the title before or during the initial patient encounter. Any signage or advertisements must contain a CRNP's professional title. A CRNP is required to plan for the management of situations beyond a CRNP's expertise and consult with and refer patients to other health care providers as appropriate.

Senate Bill 25 excludes a collaborating physician from having any legal responsibility for acts or omissions of a CRNP while practicing under the program when there is a written or collaborative agreement with the physician outside of the program.

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The bill specifically prohibits a CRNP from practicing under the Medical Practice Act of 1985 or the Osteopathic Medical Practice Act through the program. No physician-patient relationship is established when a CRNP consults with a physician or seeks clinical information or guidance.

The legislation allows a CRNP to practice and be recognized as a primary care provider under managed care and other health care plans. A CRNP may form a professional corporation with other registered nurses and licensed practitioners without receiving a referral or supervision from another practitioner. A CRNP in the program is required to carry liability insurance.

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania shall annually add to the rural area designation based on any necessary recalculation of population density to determine the scope of the program.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.

FISCAL IMPACT:

According to the Department of State, Senate Bill 25 will have a fiscal impact of \$938,000. Of that cost, \$800,000 is for staff for the State Board of Nursing to convert existing CRNP certifications and prescriptive authorities into advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) licenses and to determine the focus of each based on education and national certification examinations. The remaining \$138,000 is for upgrades to the Pennsylvania Licensure System (PALS) related to the bill.