



April 28, 2015

The Honorable Kristi L. Noem
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Noem:

The National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS) would like to express its strong support for H.R. 1611, the ***Protecting Access to Rural Therapy Services (PARTS) Act***. As you know, this bill seeks to ensure that rural and other patients have access in their own communities to a full range of outpatient therapeutic services, e.g., drug infusions, blood transfusions, outpatient psychiatric services, wound debridement, and cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation services.

Beginning in 2001, these services were administered by licensed, skilled health care professionals in hospitals under the overall direction of a physician. However, in its attempt to clarify existing regulations, in 2009 the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services retroactively interpreted policy to require that a supervising physician be physically present in the department at all times when Medicare beneficiaries receive outpatient therapeutic services. Contrary to extant research, many low-risk procedures could be safely administered in hospital outpatient departments under the general supervision of a physician or non-physician provider (NPP), such as clinical nurse specialists. The NACNS shares your concerns that small and rural hospitals, where physician and NPP shortages are most severe, need reasonable flexibility under supervisory regulations to staff their facilities appropriately in order to continue providing a full range of services to their communities. The PARTS Act would preserve patient safety and oversight while easing unreasonable hospital outpatient services supervision requirements.

Clinical nurse specialists have unique and advanced level competencies that meet the increased needs of improving quality and reducing costs in the health care system. As the voice of more than 70,000 clinical nurse specialists, NACNS applauds your leadership and offers its resources in bringing this legislation to reality. If we can be of any assistance in the passage of H.R. 1611, please feel free to contact our Executive Director Melinda Mercer Ray at 703-929-8995 or via email at mray@nacns.org.

Sincerely yours,

Peggy Barksdale, MSN, RN, OCNS-C, CNS-BC
President

A similar letter endorsing the Senate version of the PARTS Act was transmitted to its sponsors on February 6, 2015.