



October 11, 2016

Office of the West Virginia Attorney General
Patrick Morrissey, Attorney General
1900 Kanawha Blvd E.
State Capitol Building 1, Room 26-E
Charleston, WV 25305

Honorable Office of the Attorney General,

The West Virginia Nurses Association (WVNA) is writing in emphatic support of the West Virginia Attorney General's "Best Practices Initiatives and other Measures to Reduce Prescription Drug Abuse" aimed at eradicating prescription drug abuse by better equipping the state's health care providers, discouraging inappropriate prescribing and dispensing of opiates, and reducing opioid use and abuse by 25% in WV. This front-line approach encourages health care providers to learn and utilize alternative therapies to treat pain, receive complete education and training in appropriate approaches to pain control and identify and assist potentially impaired or afflicted citizens in need of life restoring or saving therapy.

The WVNA represents the interests of nurses who provide compassionate care across the state and who are well aware of the health care crisis related to inappropriate use and abuse of opioids that has struck WV harder than any other state in the nation. WVNA applauds the Attorney General's office for taking this hands on approach to assist in improving our state's health. As prescribers, health educators and professional caregivers, the nurses of WV are pleased to collaborate in helping with the implementation of these important, state specific guidelines. Specifically, WVNA would like to assist in:

1. Promoting and supporting the Controlled Substance Monitoring Program and feel expanding this system to improve monitoring of prescribers and prescriptions could help quickly identify potential concerns. WVNA hopes increased monitoring will save lives and prevent abuse. WVNA will assist in training all nurses how to utilize this system. We would like to see full time monitoring of "Red Flag" patterns in concert with a reporting number for concerns that nurses or others may identify.
2. WVNA believes that the diversion of prescription medications in WV requires more Prescribers monitoring and providing closer, short term follow up of acute pain in order to reduce the number of pills in circulation and to comply with the national recommendations put forth by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) related to the use of opioids in the treatment of chronic pain. WVNA would encourage support of WV APRN's as active members of the prescribing team by utilizing all nurses to the top of their licenses and training in a judicious, responsible manner. Allowing WV APRNs schedule II prescribing privileges would align WV with the other 45 states in the nation



that are doing a better job of monitoring and prescribing fewer controlled substances than WV.

3. Promoting and providing opportunities for continuing education of all nurses, including APRNs, on the Attorney General's recommendations and allowing such education to meet the mandated annual requirement on drug diversion and abuse. WVNA would aggressively disseminate and advertise any such educational offering by the Attorney General's office.

WVNA would again like to commend the Attorney General's office on this initiative to implement best practices in prescribing and dispensing of opioids. We have the highest regard for the Attorney General on the work and thoughtfulness of addressing this enormous health issue that faces our beautiful Mountain State. WVNA looks forward to serving as a full partner in solving this crisis so all West Virginians can meet their true potential.

Thank you for your effort and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beth Baldwin", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Beth Baldwin, MSN, APRN, PNP-BC
WVNA President