

# EMPOWERING NURSE PRACTITIONERS

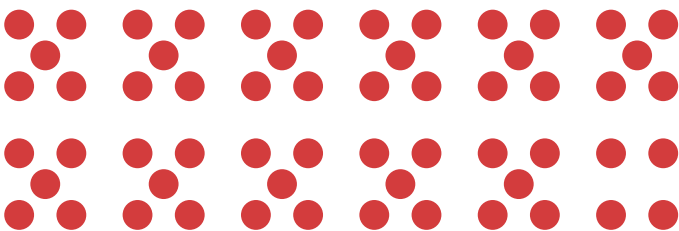
## ADDRESSING ARKANSAS'S HEALTH SERVICES SHORTAGES

### THE PROBLEM

Arkansans do not have enough primary care health service providers. This shortage makes it difficult for patients to see health service providers and manage chronic conditions. Rural patients, people on Medicaid, and children on ARKids are especially vulnerable.

Certain populations need more providers than others. When this is considered, we can see that too many Arkansans do not have access to the care they need. Fifty-nine counties are medically underserved, another 15 are partially underserved according to the Arkansas Department of Health, Health Resources and Services Administration.

**59** counties are medically underserved



**15** counties are partially underserved



### THE SOLUTION

**1** Increase access to care by **allowing nurse practitioners to be designated primary care providers (PCP)** for Medicaid and ARKids patients.

Allowing nurse practitioners to be designated primary care providers for Medicaid and ARKids patients **increases the supply of providers for Arkansans**. Nurse practitioners are already allowed to be designated primary care providers for Medicare and Veterans Affairs.

From 2009- 2017, the number of nurse practitioners per 3,500 patients increased by **90.1%** in rural U.S. counties. Physicians increased only **14.3%**.

**2** Expand the use of nurse practitioners by allowing them to work **without state required collaborative practice agreements**.

Collaborative practice agreements are costly in multiple ways and the best academic research suggests that the outcomes for patients are the same or better without collaborative practice agreements. Nurse practitioners are particularly vulnerable to the threat and reality of physicians cancelling agreements and this may dissuade them from creating or expanding their practice.

Twenty-two states and the District of Columbia allow nurse practitioners to practice and prescribe without mandated physician collaboration or supervision. The state should allow nurse practitioners to provide primary care without mandating costly and unnecessary agreements. **Arkansans need and deserve more choices.**

The views expressed are those of the authors and are not an official statement of the University of Central Arkansas.



For complete analysis, view the full report: *Arkansas Policy Recommendations: Addressing Arkansas's Health Services Shortage By Empowering Nurse Practitioners*

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