

Authorizing Pharmacists to Accept Prescriptions from ARNPs Licensed in Other States Proposed Legislation

Current law authorizes pharmacists to accept prescriptions from physicians, osteopaths, dentists, podiatrists, and veterinarians licensed in any state or in a province of Canada that shares a common border with the state of Washington. ARNPs are not included. Here is the link to the current law. <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=69.41.030>

The proposed legislation would authorize pharmacists to accept prescriptions from ARNPs licensed in any state or in a province of Canada that shares a common border with the state of Washington.

- The issue of having prescriptions from ARNPs licensed in other states filled by pharmacists is an access to care issue. This is primarily true for residents of Clark and Spokane counties who may cross into Oregon or Idaho to seek health care. Most people need prescriptions filled locally so they have easy access to refills and consultation with their pharmacists. In addition, according to the Census Bureau, an estimated 12% of Washington's population is over age 65. Many of these people are retired, have chronic health problems, and travel to other states where they may receive health care from ARNPs. The ability to have prescriptions written by them filled in Washington State assures continuity of care, and prevents exacerbations of health problems and costly hospitalizations.
- Only two other states have limits on accepting prescriptions from ARNPs licensed in other states. Both Kentucky and Texas accept prescriptions only if they conform to the state's ARNP prescribing laws. This means that in Texas a prescription for a Schedule II controlled substance cannot be filled. An example for Kentucky is that five medications may only be prescribed for a 2-week supply with no refills.
- The role of the nurse practitioner is new in Canada and there are only a few hundred nurse practitioners in British Columbia and Alberta. They have prescriptive authority that is more limited than that of ARNPs in Washington. For example, nurse practitioners in British Columbia do not prescribe controlled substances.