



A Guide for Writing to Lawmakers: Support SB1063

Pennsylvania Coalition of Nurse Practitioners

State Senators take many important votes and they receive form letters and blast emails all the time. But they don't receive very many personalized letters. In fact, when they receive 5 or 10 hard copy letters, it really stands out to them and their staff.

Tips for writing an effective letter

- **Introduce yourself and explain your connection to the issue.**
- **Make note of the lawmaker's position.**
 - Do they already support SB1063? (See below for list.) Say thanks!
 - They don't support SB1063 yet? Ask them to consider it.
- **Connect the issue to your personal experience or anecdote.**
 - Have you or a colleague had trouble maintaining a practice?
 - Have you ever had trouble being reimbursed for care by a third party?
 - Have you ever had difficulty finding a collaborator?
 - Has anyone in your community been affected by a lack of health care access?
- **Include some basics about SB1063.**
 - What is an NP? How does the current law limit NPs? How would SB1063 help?
- **Stay positive.**
 - Don't speak ill of physicians (pun intended). Nurse Practitioners respect our physician colleagues and will always work closely with them.
 - Don't use partisan language. Both Republicans and Democrats co-sponsor SB1063.
- **Stay on point.** Focus on one argument. Keep it to one page. Only use facts you're certain about. Avoid medical jargon.

General tips

- Write using polite and professional language.
 - Thank the Senator for taking the time to read about your concerns.
 - Only write to lawmakers if you live, work or go to school in their district.
 - **Write to their local district office, not Harrisburg.** Keep your focus local.
 - Find your state Senator: <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/>
 - So far **26 Senators** officially support SB1063: Argall, Baker, Blake, Boscola, Brewster, Browne, Costa, Dinniman, Erickson, Ferlo, Greenleaf, Hughes, Hutchinson, Kitchen, Leach, McIlhinney, Mensch, Scarnati, Schwank, Solobay, Stack, Teplitz, Vance, Washington, Wozniak and Yudichak.
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Key facts

- **Bringing more nurse practitioners to the front line of primary care would expand access for everyone.**
 - Patients looking to see a healthcare provider are often told that a doctor isn't taking new patients, or that they have to wait weeks for an appointment. There simply aren't enough doctors.
 - With almost 9,000 nurse practitioners (NPs) in Pa., we can help increase access to care.
- **The extensive training received by nurse practitioners leads to equal or better health outcomes for patients.**
 - Over 100 studies have shown that NPs provide equal or better primary care as physicians – and at less cost to patients and taxpayers.
- **19 states and DC have already done away with mandated collaborative agreements.**
- **It makes PA more competitive.**
 - Health care companies looking to relocate rely on NPs being able to practice to their full ability. NPs can help attract business and meet patient demand for primary care.
 - PA is better off if more NPs choose to practice here versus other states.
- **SB 1063 promotes women and small businesses.**
 - Over 95% of NPs are women who want and deserve the right to practice, start a business, make decisions, and earn an income that matches their education, certification, and experience.
- **The current system is failing rural Pennsylvanians.**
 - 22% of Pennsylvanians – including 55 of 67 counties – reside in designated shortage or medically underserved areas.
 - Non-rural areas have 1 primary care physician for every 382 residents. Rural areas have 1 for every 663 residents.
- **The current system is failing many urban Pennsylvanians.**
 - Medicaid patients have a significantly harder time obtaining primary care.

What SB1063 does:

- It brings PA up to date with 19 other states and DC.
 - It removes an outdated mandate that requires NPs to enter into formal legal agreements with physicians.
 - It allows insurers and other third party payors to reimburse NPs directly for their services as a primary care provider.
 - It gives hospitals and healthcare providers more control over medical staff membership, clinical privileges, and who can refer patients to a specialist.
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Sample letter

Senator Robert Tomlinson
654 Woodbourne Road
Langhorne, PA 19047
May 29, 2014

Dear Senator Tomlinson,

My name is Jane Doe. As a certified registered Nurse Practitioner (NP) at one of Langhorne's most prominent family care offices, I work on the front line of health care in Lower Bucks County.

I am writing to ask you to consider supporting Senate Bill 1063, which would expand access to health care in our community by getting rid of outdated mandates on Nurse Practitioners. 19 other states have already modernized their laws; health care quality in those states has gone up while costs have gone down.

The current law isn't working for patients in our area. In the past year, two of my colleagues nearly lost their ability to practice when their collaborating physician decided to retire with little warning. Thankfully, the physician decided to delay his retirement. The 1,250 patients who visit their practice have no idea how close they came to being forced to find somewhere else to receive medical care.

I had similar problems when I first began to practice here 15 years ago. Despite being trained with 8 years of experience at the time, it took me 3 months to find a "collaborating" physician to agree to vouch for my license.

Countless stories like these are playing out constantly, contributing to extra weeks and months of extra waiting for Bucks County patients who need primary care.

NPs are nurses who have received a Master's or Doctorate. We can see patients, prescribe medication, operate our own businesses, refer patients to specialists and more. We are an untapped resource that could expand access to care -- if insurance companies could reimburse us directly and hospitals were allowed to fully utilize our skills.

Bucks County patients need SB1063, and I hope you will consider supporting it. If you have any further questions, please contact me at 215-555-1234 or jane.doe@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe, CRNP

123 Fake Street
Langhorne, PA 19047