

Senate Bill 603

By: Senators Thomas of the 54th, Goggans of the 7th, Balfour of the 9th, Williams of the 19th, Unterman of the 45th and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Code Section 16-13-21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
2 definitions relative to regulation of controlled substances, so as to revise the definition of  
3 "practitioner"; to amend Chapter 26 of Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
4 relating to nurses, so as to provide for a definition; to provide for enactment of rules and  
5 regulations affecting advanced practice registered nurses; to provide for a change in certain  
6 prohibited activities; to change a provision relating to a Drug Enforcement Administration  
7 license applicability to nurses and physician's assistants; to amend Article 2 of Chapter 34  
8 of Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the physicians, so as to  
9 provide for a physician to delegate certain medical acts to allow an advanced practice  
10 registered nurse to issue prescription drug orders and provide professional samples, order  
11 diagnostic studies, medical devices, and in certain life-threatening situations to order  
12 radiographic imaging; to provide for construction and limitations related to such delegation;  
13 to provide for definitions; to provide for the conditions of a nurse protocol agreement; to  
14 provide for patients receiving certain care to be examined by a physician on a determinative  
15 basis; to provide for execution of prescription drug orders; to provide for related matters; to  
16 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

18 **SECTION 1.**

19 Code Section 16-13-21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to definitions  
20 relative to regulation of controlled substances, is amended by striking paragraph (23) and  
21 inserting in its place the following:

22 "(23) 'Practitioner' means:

23 (A) A physician, dentist, pharmacist, podiatrist, veterinarian, scientific investigator, or  
24 other person licensed, registered, or otherwise authorized under the laws of this state  
25 to distribute, dispense, conduct research with respect to, or to administer a controlled  
26 substance in the course of professional practice or research in this state;

1 (B) A pharmacy, hospital, or other institution licensed, registered, or otherwise  
 2 authorized by law to distribute, dispense, conduct research with respect to, or to  
 3 administer a controlled substance in the course of professional practice or research in  
 4 this state; ~~or~~

5 (C) An advanced practice registered nurse acting pursuant to the authority of Code  
 6 Section 43-34-26.3. For purposes of this chapter and Code Section 43-34-26.3, an  
 7 advanced practice registered nurse is authorized to register with the federal Drug  
 8 Enforcement Administration and appropriate state authorities; or

9 ~~(C)~~(D) A physician's assistant acting pursuant to the authority of subsection (e.1) of  
 10 Code Section 43-34-103. For purposes of this chapter and subsection (e.1) of Code  
 11 Section 43-34-103 and notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (g) of Code  
 12 Section 43-34-26.1, a physician's assistant is authorized to register with the federal  
 13 Drug Enforcement Administration and appropriate state authorities."

## 14 SECTION 2.

15 Chapter 26 of Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to nurses, is  
 16 amended by adding a new paragraph to Code Section 43-26-3, relating to definitions, to read  
 17 as follows:

18 "(1.1) 'Advanced practice registered nurse' means a registered professional nurse licensed  
 19 under this chapter who is recognized by the board as having met the requirements  
 20 established by the board to engage in advanced nursing practice and who holds a master's  
 21 degree and national board certification in his or her area of speciality, or a person who  
 22 was recognized as an advanced practice registered nurse by the board on or before  
 23 January 1, 2006. Only a person recognized by the board as an advanced practice  
 24 registered nurse shall be authorized to hold himself or herself out as an advanced practice  
 25 registered nurse or to use the initials A.P.R.N."

## 26 SECTION 3.

27 Said chapter is further amended by striking paragraph (12) of subsection (a) of Code Section  
 28 43-26-5, relating to general powers of the board, and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

29 "(12) Be authorized to enact rules and regulations for registered professional nurses in  
 30 their performing acts under a nurse protocol as authorized in Code Section 43-34-26.1  
 31 and enact rules and regulations for advanced practice registered nurses in performing acts  
 32 as authorized in Code Section 43-34-26.3;"



1 (9) 'Life threatening' means an emergency situation in which a patient's life or physical  
2 well-being will be harmed if certain testing is not performed immediately.

3 (10) 'Nurse protocol agreement' means a written document mutually agreed upon and  
4 signed by an advanced practice registered nurse and a physician, by which document the  
5 physician delegates to that advanced practice registered nurse the authority to perform  
6 certain medical acts pursuant to this Code section, and which acts may include, without  
7 being limited to, the ordering of drugs, medical devices, medical treatments, or diagnostic  
8 studies or in life-threatening situations radiographic imaging tests. Such agreements shall  
9 conform to the provisions set forth in subsection (c) of this Code section.

10 (11) 'Order' means to select pursuant to a nurse protocol agreement which drug, medical  
11 device, medical treatment, or diagnostic study or in life-threatening situations  
12 radiographic imaging test is appropriate for a patient and to communicate the same in  
13 writing, orally, via facsimile, or electronically.

14 (12) 'Physician' means a person licensed to practice medicine under this chapter and:

15 (A) Whose principal place of practice is within this state; or

16 (B) Whose principal place of practice is outside this state but is within 50 miles from  
17 the location where the nurse protocol agreement is being utilized within this state.

18 (13) 'Prescription drug order' means a written or oral order of an advanced practice  
19 registered nurse for a drug or medical device for a specific patient. Such term includes  
20 an electronic visual image prescription drug order and an electronic data prescription drug  
21 order.

22 (14) 'Professional sample' means a complimentary dose of a drug, medication,  
23 medication voucher, or medical device provided by the manufacturer for use in patient  
24 care.

25 (15) 'Radiographic imaging test' means a computed tomography, magnetic resonance  
26 imaging, positron emission tomography, or nuclear medicine.

27 (16) 'Routine preventive health maintenance' means evaluation and maintenance of an  
28 individual's health including those medical acts appropriate to age and gender, medical  
29 history, and risk factors such as examination, counseling, anticipatory guidance, risk  
30 factor reduction intervention, and ordering of appropriate immunizations and laboratory  
31 and diagnostic procedures.

32 (b)(1) In addition to and without limiting the authority granted pursuant to Code Section  
33 43-34-26.1, a physician may delegate to an advanced practice registered nurse in  
34 accordance with a nurse protocol agreement the authority to order drugs, medical devices,  
35 medical treatments, or diagnostic studies or in life-threatening situations radiographic  
36 imaging tests.

1 (2) A delegating physician entering into a nurse protocol agreement pursuant to this  
2 Code section shall adequately supervise acts delegated in accordance with a nurse  
3 protocol agreement. Except for patients receiving services in the facilities identified in  
4 paragraphs (1) through (6) of subsection (g) of this Code section, patients receiving  
5 services pursuant to a nurse protocol agreement shall be examined by a physician:

6 (A) Biennially for patients receiving oral contraceptives, hormone replacement  
7 therapy, prenatal vitamins, or routine preventive health maintenance; and

8 (B) Annually for patients receiving ongoing medical treatments, drugs other than  
9 controlled substances, or medical devices.

10 (3) Patients receiving services pursuant to a nurse protocol agreement shall be examined  
11 by a physician quarterly if the patient is receiving controlled substances.

12 (c) A nurse protocol agreement between a physician and an advanced practice registered  
13 nurse pursuant to this Code section shall:

14 (1) Be between an advanced practice registered nurse who is in a comparable specialty  
15 area or field as that of the delegating physician;

16 (2) Contain a provision for immediate consultation between the advanced practice  
17 registered nurse and the delegating physician; if the delegating physician is not available,  
18 the delegating physician for purposes of consultation may designate another physician  
19 who is aware of and in agreement with the nurse protocol agreement;

20 (3) Identify the parameters under which delegated acts may be performed by the  
21 advanced practice registered nurse, including without limitation the number of refills  
22 which may be ordered, the kinds of diagnostic studies which may be ordered, the extent,  
23 if authorized, to which radiographic images may be ordered in life-threatening situations,  
24 and the circumstances, if any, under which the advanced practice registered nurse may  
25 execute a prescription drug order. The nurse protocol agreement may allow an advanced  
26 practice registered nurse to review a report of diagnostic studies or radiographic images,  
27 or review the images, but shall not authorize the advanced practice registered nurse to  
28 interpret such report or images and shall require the advanced practice registered nurse  
29 to forward a copy of such report to the delegating physician;

30 (4) Require documentation either in writing or by electronic means or other medium by  
31 the advanced practice registered nurse of those acts performed by the advanced practice  
32 registered nurse which are medical acts required to be authorized by the delegating  
33 physician in the nurse protocol agreement;

34 (5) Include a schedule for periodic review by the delegating physician of patient records.  
35 Such patient records review may be achieved with a sampling of such records as  
36 determined by the delegating physician;

1 (6) Provide for patient review, evaluation, or follow-up by the delegating physician, with  
2 the frequency of such review, evaluation, or follow-up based on the nature, extent, and  
3 scope of the delegated act or acts as determined by the delegating physician and in  
4 accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (b) of this Code section;

5 (7) Be reviewed, revised, or updated annually by the delegating physician and the  
6 advanced practice registered nurse;

7 (8) Be available for review upon written request to the advanced practice registered nurse  
8 by the Georgia Board of Nursing; and

9 (9) Be filed by the delegating physician with the board.

10 (d) A written prescription drug order issued pursuant to this Code section shall be signed  
11 by the advanced practice registered nurse and shall be on a form which shall include,  
12 without limitation, the names of the advanced practice registered nurse and delegating  
13 physician who are parties to the nurse protocol agreement, the patient's name and address,  
14 the drug or device ordered, directions with regard to the taking and dosage of the drug or  
15 use of the device, and the number of refills. A prescription drug order which is transmitted  
16 either electronically or via facsimile shall conform to the requirements set out in paragraphs  
17 (1) and (2) of subsection (c) of Code Section 26-4-80, respectively.

18 (e) An advanced practice registered nurse may be authorized under a nurse protocol  
19 agreement to request, receive, and sign for professional samples and may distribute  
20 professional samples to patients. The office or facility at which the advanced practice  
21 registered nurse is working shall maintain a list of the professional samples approved by  
22 the delegating physician for request, receipt, and distribution by the advanced practice  
23 registered nurse as well as a complete list of the specific number and dosage of each  
24 professional sample and medication voucher received and dispensed. In addition to the  
25 requirements of this Code section, all professional samples shall be maintained as required  
26 by applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

27 (f) A managed care system, health plan, hospital, insurance company, or other similar  
28 entity shall not require a physician or advanced practice registered nurse to be a party to  
29 a nurse protocol agreement as a condition for participation in or reimbursement from such  
30 entity.

31 (g) A delegating physician may not enter into a nurse protocol agreement pursuant to this  
32 Code section with more than two advanced practice registered nurses at any one time,  
33 except this limitation shall not apply to an advanced practice registered nurse that is  
34 practicing:

35 (1) In the emergency department of a hospital licensed under Title 31;

36 (2) In a designated teaching hospital;

37 (3) In the Division of Public Health of the Department of Human Resources;

1 (4) In any county board of health;

2 (5) In any free health clinic; or

3 (6) In any organization which has been established under the authority of or is receiving  
4 funds pursuant to 42 U.S.C. Section 254b or 254c of the United States Public Health  
5 Service Act.

6 (h) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to create a presumption of liability,  
7 either civil or criminal, on the part of a pharmacist duly licensed under Chapter 4 of Title  
8 26 who, in good faith, fills a prescription drug order of an advanced practice registered  
9 nurse issued pursuant to a nurse protocol agreement.

10 (i) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to apply to the practice of a certified  
11 registered nurse anesthetist.

12 (j) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to require an advanced practice  
13 registered nurse to be a party to a nurse protocol agreement in order to practice as a  
14 registered professional nurse or an advanced practice registered nurse as otherwise  
15 permitted by Article 1 of Chapter 26 of this title.

16 (k) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to authorize an advanced practice  
17 registered nurse to issue a prescription drug order for a Schedule I or II controlled  
18 substance or authorize refills of any drug for more than 12 months from the date of the  
19 original order except in the case of oral contraceptives, hormone replacement therapy, or  
20 prenatal vitamins which may be refilled for a period of 24 months.

21 (l) Except for advanced practice registered nurses who work in the facilities identified in  
22 paragraphs (1) through (6) of subsection (g) of this Code section, it shall be unlawful for  
23 an advanced practice registered nurse, alone or in combination with others, to employ a  
24 physician who is required to supervise the medical acts of the employing advanced practice  
25 registered nurse. Such unlawful practice shall be sanctioned by the Georgia Board of  
26 Nursing and the board governing the respective professions."

27 **SECTION 7.**

28 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.