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July 8, 2019

Patrice A. Harris, MD MA  
President  
American Medical Association  
AMA Plaza  
330 N. Wabash Ave., Suite 39300  
Chicago, IL 60611-5885

**Open Letter to the AMA: Where is the Public Campaign Advocating for Physicians?**

Dear Dr. Harris and AMA Board of Directors:

The American Academy of Emergency Medicine Resident and Student Association (AAEM/RSA), along with the AAEM, works tirelessly to advocate for the rights of emergency medicine physicians and physicians-in-training. As one of the largest emergency medicine resident organizations, RSA along with AAEM have major concerns regarding the recent advertising by nurse practitioners advocating for their independent practice.

As I'm sure you will have seen, the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) has put forth a significant public campaign challenging physician education and compassion with slogans such as "brain of a doctor, heart of a nurse" going so far as airing commercials recommending patients actively choose a nurse practitioner over a physician for one's health care. The AANP suggests that this care is equivalent or better than that of a physician.

Further, we are consistently seeing legislation pop up around the country pushing for the independent practice of NPs and other midlevel providers, and our organizations have thus far been working independently to gather members in grassroots-style campaigns to combat these bills. While we believe in the power of our members, we need the AMA, as the single largest voice of all physicians, to step up and notably increase their efforts against these dishonest and destructive campaigns by the AANP.

Right now, the only voice being heard publicly by patients is that of the nurse practitioners. A unified public campaign in support of physician-led care from the

555 East Wells Street  
Suite 1100  
Milwaukee, WI 53202-3823  
phone 1-800-884-AAEM  
fax 414-276-3349  
email info@aaemrsa.org  
website www.aaemrsa.org

AMA is critical to ensure the protection of patient safety. NPs and other midlevel providers do not have the training required to sufficiently care for patients independently, only trained and board certified physicians do. With the guidance of its members, the American Academy of Emergency Medicine (AAEM) recently updated their [position statement](#) to state that the role of nurse practitioners and other midlevel providers is one that should be supervised as members of the patient care team. We strongly defend this statement.

We at the AAEM/RSA, representing thousands of our resident and future physicians, along with AAEM, with an even larger membership of attending physicians, urge the AMA to lead a sizable public endeavor, including:

1. Introducing a PR campaign that advocates for physician-led care and educates the public of the discrepancies in nurse practitioner care
2. Increasing resources on state-level legislative operations that combat independent practice bills introduced by midlevel providers

These efforts should be a priority for the AMA. Waiting for the complete devaluation of our medical degrees and the resulting significant harm to our patients' safety as they actively pursue less capable "providers" is not acceptable. We must work together to directly combat this pressing issue in order to protect our profession, our future physicians, and most importantly our patients.

Sincerely,

AAEM & AAEM/RSA