

## HEALTH CARE PROVIDER ALERT

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### Illinois Nursing Act changed to Benefit Advanced Practice Nurses

By [Lee Levin](#), Counsel

Effective January 1, 2018, Governor Bruce Rauner signed into law certain amendments to the Illinois Nurse Practice Act (the "Act"). Of particular note are changes relating to Advanced Practice Nurses ("APNs"). The most notable parts of the Act are the following:

1. The title of APN has now been changed to "Advanced Practice Registered Nurse" ("APRN"). The state will still recognize the APN designation, but are now permitting Advanced Practice Registered Nurses to use the "APRN" title and that designation has been updated in all Illinois laws that reference APNs.
2. Continuing professional education requirements for APRNs have been expanded from 50 hours per year to 80 hours per year. The manner in which these requirements can be met are as follows:
  - (i) Fifty (50) hours of such education may be undertaken by taking continuing education programs which shall include no less than twenty (20) hours of pharmacotherapeutics, including 10 hours of opioid prescribing or substance abuse education.
  - (ii) The remaining thirty (30) hours of the requirement can be met by the APRN making presentations in the APRN's clinical specialty, evidence-based practice or quality improvement projects, publications, research projects or preceptor.
3. Perhaps most importantly of all, APRNs who meet the requirements of Section 65-43 of the Act will not be required to enter into a written Collaboration Agreement with a Collaborating Physician. Section 65-43's requirements are as follows:
  - At least 250 hours of continuing education or training and at least 4,000 hours of clinical experience, continuing education or training hours required by subsection (b) shall be in the APRN's area of certification after first attaining national certification.
  - The clinical experience necessary to meet these requirements shall be in collaboration with a physician or physicians and must be attested to by the collaborating physician or physicians and the APRN.

The scope of practice of an APRN does not include operative surgery.

Medical practices who currently have an APRN or who are hiring one should confirm whether a collaboration agreement is required, or if the requirements of Section 65-43 are satisfied. We can assist with the filing of the attestation with the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation as required under the updated law.

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