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Senate of Pennsylvania

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TO: All Senators

FROM: Senator Dave Argall *DA*

DATE: March 2, 2011

SUBJECT: Nurse Title Protection

In the near future I will be introducing legislation that will establish statutory protection for the use of the title "nurse".

Currently, Pennsylvania law prohibits any person from using the title of "Registered Nurse (RN)" and "Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)" in a professional capacity, unless the person is duly licensed to practice as such by the Pennsylvania Nursing Board.

The use of the title "Nurse" is not presently protected by Pennsylvania Law. Consequently, unlicensed individuals working as health assistants or health techs in medical facilities and schools can and do refer to themselves as a "Nurse," thus misrepresenting to the public that they are authorized, educated and trained to practice nursing. This misleads the patient regarding the qualifications of the person caring for them and poses serious patient safety concerns if inaccurate, inappropriate, or even dangerous health care advice is given to the patient.

Individuals receiving health care and those employing nurses have a right to know whether they are dealing with a legally qualified nurse. Professionals who legitimately use the title "Nurse" are individually responsible and accountable for their actions, and are required to adhere to professional codes of practice and ethics. Reserving that title for those who meet the legal standard allows the public to distinguish legally qualified nurses from other providers.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation please contact BJ Sieg at bsieg@pasen.gov or 7-2637.