

## **POLL: TEXAS VOTERS SUPPORT REMOVING BARRIERS ON APRNS**

Weatherford Democrat  
March 20, 2023

A new statewide poll shows an overwhelming majority of Texas voters support modernizing state regulations on Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) to make it easier for patients to see healthcare providers closer to home. The poll was commissioned by Texans for Healthcare Access and conducted in February by Baseline & Associates Inc. and GS Strategy Group.

The poll of 800 likely voters found 90% of Texans believe Texas should make it easier for more patients to get care from APRNs, and 81% support removing the requirement that APRNs obtain an often-costly contract with a physician before they can treat patients. The poll's margin of error was +/-3.5%.

Texas voters strongly believe patients should be able to choose how, when, and from whom they get their care. Voters say patients face problems such as overstretched providers, extended travel times, and long waits for appointments. They support options like seeing a nurse practitioner for visits and treatment and telehealth to help eliminate barriers like travel and long wait times, and to make it easier for patients to access care.

Findings include:

- 75% of respondents believe it needs to be easier to access healthcare services in Texas. Voters are concerned about being able to access care when and where they need it.
- 82% of respondents say that hospitals, clinics, and medical offices are overwhelmed with the number of people seeking medical care. Voters say this is making it hard for people to get appointments and treatment when they need it.
- Nine in 10 voters want to make it easier for patients to get care from APRNs and help end the staffing shortage. The survey found 90% of respondents agree that Texas should make it easier for more patients to get care from nurse practitioners and APRNs to help address the shortage of primary care physicians in rural and underserved communities.
- 81% of voters support removing the requirement that an APRN obtain a contracting agreement before they can practice. Support spans political parties with

85% of Democrats, 72% of Independents, and 80% of Republicans supporting the policy. In 2022, the State Republican Party adopted this policy into their platform and the State Democratic Party Convention adopted it as a final resolution.

- 83% of voters say Texas should remove regulatory barriers to address our workforce shortage and help recruit and retain more APRNs. Texas is competing with other states for the most qualified healthcare providers, but its laws are among the most restrictive.

More than half the states – including Florida, New York, and California – along with all branches of the U.S. Military and the VA have done away with contracting physician requirements and none have changed their mind. This puts Texas at a competitive disadvantage. Data from the growing number of states who have modernized their laws show improved access and continuity of care for patients and reduced administrative costs and burdens.

Eliminating the requirement would not affect scope of practice. APRNs would continue providing the same services they already do, only without the need for a contract. This would allow APRNs to more easily provide care to Texas patients, especially in rural and underserved areas.

“We are facing a critical healthcare staff shortage in Texas, especially in rural areas where patients have to choose between waiting weeks to see a provider or leaving their communities to seek care,” said Emily Dove, Policy Advisor for Texas 2036.

“APRNs are highly trained and well-respected healthcare professionals who have garnered the trust of their patients,” said Tom Aldred, Executive Director of Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute (TCCRI). “Despite decades of data showing their reliability and proven ability to improve patient outcomes, Texas laws remain outdated and anticompetitive. Removing the contracting physician requirement in Texas will enable APRNs to expand access to care and reduce patient costs.”

Senator César Blanco has introduced the HEAL Texans Act, SB 1700, which would eliminate the contracting physician requirement, provide more access and options for Texans who need care, and reflect the will of an overwhelming majority of Texans.

Texans for Healthcare Access is a coalition of organizations representing consumers, business, and a broad range of healthcare stakeholders, including: AARP Texas, Amazon, Americans for Prosperity — Texas, APRN Alliance, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, Consortium of Texas Certified Nurse Midwives, Convenient Care Association, Every Texan (formerly Center for Public Policy Priorities), Leading Age Texas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Texas, National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Nurses Care Hub, Philippine Nurses Association of America, R Street Institute, Texas 2036, Texans for Affordable Health Care, Texans for Midwifery, Texas Association of Benefit Administrators, Texas Association of Business, Texas Association of Nurse Anesthetists, Texas Association of Health Plans, Texas Association of Health Underwriters, [Texas Business Leadership Council](#), Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute, Texas Clinical Nurse Specialists, Texas Doctors for Social Responsibility, Texas Employers for Insurance Reform, Texas Impact, Texas Nurses Association, Texas Nursing Legislative Agenda Coalition, Texas Nurse Practitioners, Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals, Texas Physician Assistant Business Alliance of Texas, Texas School Nurses Organization, Texas Silver Haired Legislature, The Heartland Institute, The Libre Initiative, University Health, Veterans Deserve Care and Young Conservatives of Texas.