



ACNP POSITION PAPER Nurse Practitioners and Direct to Consumer Prescription/Nonprescription Drug Advertising

Nurse Practitioners occupy a vitally important place in American health care, and, as a professional organization for nurse practitioners, the American College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP) is committed to increasing the understanding of the American public of the role of the nurse practitioner and the diminution of barriers to the full utilization of nurse practitioners in the health care arena. By so doing, ACNP believes that it can affect a better level of health care for millions of Americans and increased access to quality health care for patients and families.

To this end, it is the position of ACNP and the more than 100,000 nurse practitioners in the United States (HRSA 2000) that patients and families must be given correct consumer information regarding the profession and the care delivery, which can be affected and expected by Americans. One area of consumer information is contained in pharmaceutical advertising of prescription and nonprescription (OTC) drugs and immunizing agents. This has been addressed by the United States Food and Drug Administration's "Guidance to the Industry - Consumer Directed Broadcast Advertisements" (August 1999) which states: "FDA also reminds sponsors of prescription drug advertisements to be careful not to imply that only physicians can prescribe their products." It is enormously important that consumers be directed to all qualified health care professionals who are able to diagnose, treat and prescribe these agents. If the consumer is directed to only one group of licensed prescribers, in effect, consumers are misdirected and denied the correct and complete information by which they base their health care decisions.

Increasing the health knowledge base of patients and families (consumers) is a vitally important function of nurse practitioner philosophy. It is only through the correct dissemination of information that consumers can make decisions, which affect their lives and the lives of their families. To this end, the American College of Nurse Practitioners calls on all pharmaceutical companies, and the advertising firms which they employ, to direct consumers in their product advertising to all licensed health care prescribers or qualified health care professionals.

By working together with the pharmaceutical industry to assure full and correct information to consumers, the American College of Nurse Practitioners believes that the health care status of the American public can be enhanced and improved. (2004)