

JUN 25 2014



June 17th, 2014

Senator Jane Nelson
Chair
The Texas Sunset Advisory Commission
P.O. Box 13066, Austin, Texas 78711

To the Honorable Jane Nelson:

My name is Maeve Sheehan MD, and I am writing you regarding the recommendation of your committee to de-license respiratory care practitioners (RCP) in the state of Texas. I am an Associate Professor at UT Southwestern Medical Center and my clinical practice is at Children's Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. I am the Medical Director of Transport and the Chief of Inpatient Services. I am also a practicing Intensive Care Physician. I am the Co-Chair of the Emergency Medicine Committee of the Texas Pediatric Society and the mother of a 4 year old child with a chronic medical condition. As a practicing attending Physician I care for many critically ill children requiring advanced ICU care.

At our institution RCPs have a similar level of practice as nurses and work around the clock, holidays and weekends. They play a vital role in assessment, treatment recommendation and delivery of safe bedside therapy to our patients, many who are critically ill. RCPs are members of important emergency response teams including the; hospital disaster response team, cardiac arrest team, and rapid assessment team, level one trauma team and high risk delivery team. In these roles and others, the RCP is frequently at the bedside providing treatment for patients who are acutely decompensating. They often initiate (per protocol) or recommend life saving measures for many types of patients with and without lung disease. As part of their scope of practice RCP's provide therapeutic, invasive and non-invasive procedures, diagnostic testing, management and troubleshooting of mechanical ventilators (life support system) and delivery of medications for the treatment of asthma, COPD, and other pulmonary diseases. Many of these technological advancements in the field of medicine require the unique level of expertise possessed by the RCP to deliver high quality patient care safely.

As described above RCPs are vital members of healthcare teams at our institution. Removal of the licensure process for respiratory care practitioners in Texas would most certainly endanger the health, safety and welfare of the patients that we serve. Moreover, the current state license allows RCPs to manage patients utilizing protocol directed therapy approved by medical leadership. RCP driven protocols have been shown to be safe and effective in the medical literature. De-licensing RCPs will increase the cost of care, increase hospital length of stay, and decrease provider productivity. De-regulation of these healthcare professionals would certainly be a step backwards for acute health care in the state.

It is my professional opinion that in order for our institutions to maintain a safe, patient centered, patient focused and trustworthy atmosphere for our patients, we require licensed, professional respiratory therapists as a part of our healthcare team. Therefore, I urge you to maintain mandatory respiratory care practitioner state licensure for Respiratory Therapists in the state of Texas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Maeve Sheehan MD'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.