Patients are concerned about the cost and quality of health care. While there is certainly room for improvement in the health care system, allowing non-physicians, including nurse practitioners, to diagnose and treat patients without any physician oversight is a step in the wrong direction. The best way to support high-quality care and lower costs is to keep physicians as the leader of the health care team.

**Physicians Are Trained to Lead**

With the highest level of education and 20x the clinical training

- **Physicians**
  - 4 years Education
  - 3–7 years Residency
  - 10,000–16,000 hours Training

- **Nurse Practitioners**
  - 2–3 years Education
  - No residency
  - 500–720 hours Training

All physicians get vital hands-on instruction, but 60% of nurse practitioner programs in 2019 were mostly or completely online.

**Scope Expansion Increases Costs**

- X-ray ordering increased among non-physicians 441%
- Non-physicians needed 2x the number of biopsies to screen for skin cancer
- Patients were 15% more likely to receive an antibiotic from a non-physician

6.3% of nurse practitioners prescribed opioids to over half of their patients compared to 1.3% of physicians.

According to a leading ACO, patients with non-physician primary care providers had $43 higher spending per member per month compared to those who had a physician, which could translate to $10.3M more in annual spending.

**Patients Prefer Physician-Led Care**

- 91% say a physician’s education and training are vital for optimal care
- 3/4 would wait longer and pay more to be treated by a physician
- 95% say it’s important for a physician to be involved in their diagnosis and treatment

Health care teams working together—with physicians in the lead—is critical to having the best and safest outcomes for patients.

**Myth**

Allowing non-physicians to practice without physician involvement will increase access to care in rural and underserved areas.

**Fact**

States with laws allowing nurse practitioners to practice without physician supervision or collaboration has not guaranteed increased access in rural and underserved areas.

All patients, regardless of ZIP code, deserve care led by a physician.