



Free the Nurses--and the Patients

By David Henderson

October 17, 2011

If a natural disaster hit Oregon, the victims would have fared much better. The state's 8,500 nurse practitioners (NPs) are free to come to the aid of people in need of care, with no legal obstruction. In Oregon, nurses with the proper credentials and licensure may open their practices anywhere they choose and operate in the same capacity as a primary care physician without oversight from any other medical professionals. They can draw blood, prescribe medications, and even admit patients to the hospital.

This is from "[Why Not a Nurse?](#)" by John Goodman and Virginia Traweek. The authors show that the degree of regulation of nurse practitioners runs the gamut, with Oregon being relatively unregulated and Texas being tightly regulated.

Another excerpt:

In Texas, which has some of the most stringent regulations in the country, however, a nurse practitioner can't do much of anything without being supervised by a doctor who must:

- Not oversee more than four nurses at one time.
- Not oversee nurses located outside of a 75 mile radius.
- Conduct a random review of 10 percent of the nurses' patient charts every 10 days.
- Be on the premises 20 percent of the time.