



March 2, 2009

The Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro
Chair, House Committee on Finance
State Capitol, Room 306

**Re: H.B. 1378 HD1– RELATING TO ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES.
Hearing on Tuesday, March 3, 2009 at 3:00 p.m., Room 308**

Dear Chair Oshiro and Members of the Committee on Finance:

I am Mihoko Ito, an attorney with Goodsill Anderson Quinn & Stifel, testifying on behalf of Walgreen Co. (“Walgreens”). Walgreens operates more than 6,600 locations in 49 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Walgreens also operates 217 Take Care Health Clinics in 15 states within select Walgreens stores, employing Advance Practice Nurses and Physician Assistants.

Walgreens **supports the intent of** H.B. 1378, HD1, requires insurers, mutual and fraternal benefit societies, and health maintenance organizations to recognize advanced practice registered nurses as primary care providers. Grants increased signature authority and prescriptive rights. Amends definition of advanced practice registered nurse:

- to mandate that insurers recognize advance practice nurses as primary care providers;
- to expand the signature authority to allow advanced practice nurses to “sign, certify and endorse all documents relating to health care for their patient”; and
- to expand the prescriptive authority of advanced practice nurses, while remaining **neutral** on the provision to expand that authority to include controlled substances.¹

Walgreens supports H.B. 1378, HD 1 because advanced practice nurses are highly qualified professionals, who are consistently rated by patients as trusted professionals in the health care system. Walgreen’s Take Care advanced practice nurses are board certified, with master’s degrees in the science of nursing. Research has shown that advanced practice nurses provide care comparable in quality to that provided by primary care physicians.

In addition, advanced practice nurses provide comparable care to physicians at lower costs to the patient. A typical visit to a nurse practitioner at a retail clinic costs \$59-\$80, whereas the same visit to a physician’s office costs \$95-\$150.

¹ With respect to prescriptive authority for controlled substances, Walgreens does not permit its advanced practice nurses to prescribe controlled substances even where permitted by law, as a matter of good business practices. Therefore, Walgreens does not have a position on this provision of the bill.

Advance practice nurses are a viable and qualified alternative to physician primary care, and in light of the increasing primary care physician shortage and rising healthcare costs overall, we respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of this measure.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.