



David M. Litchman, MD, Chair
AMA Reference Committee C, Medical Education
c/o Roger Brown, PhD
Director, Office of House of Delegates Affairs
American Medical Association
515 N. State Street
Chicago, IL 60610

sent by email to:
Roger.Brown@ama-assn.org

Re: American Medical Association House of Delegates Resolution 303 (A-08)
Protection of the Titles “Doctor,” “Resident,” and “Residency”

Dear Dr.Lichtman:

The Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA) is the professional organization of the approximately 40,000 registered nurses employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution 303 proposes to limit the title “Doctor” in a “medical setting” only to physicians, dentists, and podiatrists; the title “Resident” to physicians, dentists, and podiatrists in-training, and “Residency” only to those training programs. This resolution is directed at schools of nursing which have “re-titled their training program as a Residency and their students and residents.” Resolution 303 states that “title encroachment” is “of concern because patients will be confused when the titles of Doctor, Resident, and Residency, are applied to non-physicians who hold non-medical doctorates, or to non-physicians in training.”

NOVA supports the position of the American Nurses Association (ANA) that the term “doctor” has been used for centuries to identify teachers, scholars, and persons of higher learning in our society. Those who have earned a doctorate degree, including nurses, may be called “doctor,” so there is no legitimate reason to exclude them.

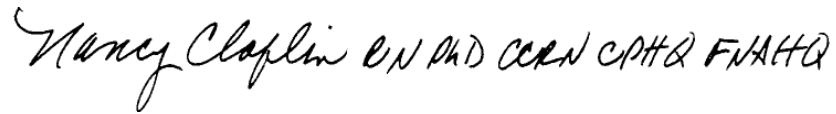
NOVA supports efforts aimed at decreasing patient confusion with caregivers. Patients have the right to know the names, credentials, and roles of their caregivers. Doctors of nursing are an integral part of the entire interdisciplinary health care team, and play a different role than a medical doctor. Patients benefit when the members of the interdisciplinary team work together to provide the best care.

NOVA supports ANA’s statement that use of doctor is appropriate for those individuals who have earned the highest or one of the highest academic degrees conferred by a

university, and that there is no legitimate reason to exclude nurses from this practice. NOVA supports the nursing community's assertion that all patients have the right to understand who is taking care of them, and what credentials qualify them to provide healthcare services.

The Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs appreciates the opportunity to provide our views on this resolution. We urge Reference Committee C to make a resolution for either withdrawal or unfavorable consideration of this resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Claflin RN PhD CCRN CPHQ FNAHQ". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Nancy Claflin RN PhD CCRN CPHQ FNAHQ
President