

3 February 2025

House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs

Testimony in Support of HB25-1082 Qualified Individuals Death Certificates

Madame Chair and Committee Members,

I am Colleen Casper, a nurse and longtime advocate for access to quality and affordable healthcare for all Coloradans.

I would like to thank Representative Brown and Representative Weinberg for bringing this bill forward.

The Nurse-Physician Advisory Taskforce for Healthcare in Colorado (NPATCH) is a statutorily defined committee designated as an advisor to the Department of Regulatory Affairs (DORA) and the Colorado Legislature on matters related to nurse and physician scope of practice and interdisciplinary collaboration.

In April of 2024, NPATCH finalized their recommendations regarding the [Expansion of Death Certificate Signature Authority](#). Their recommendations are the result of the following findings:

- 1) acknowledgement of the changing landscape in primary care providers, specifically the expansion of the role of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN) and Physician Assistants (PA) assuring access to timely primary care in both rural and urban Colorado;
- 2) recognition that at least 40 other States currently authorize signature authority of death certificates for APRNs and PAs; and;
- 3) families of the deceased rely on their primary care providers to assure timely filings of required documentation of death to facilitate necessary personal and legal actions.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this bill and I respectfully ask for your yes vote.

Best,
Colleen Casper, DNP, RN, MS
Healthcare Policy Entrepreneur
Denver, CO
303-929-9213
Mary.colleen@comcast.net



TO: Chair, Rep. Willford, and Vice Chair, Rep. Clifford
FROM: Compassion & Choices
DATE: January 31, 2025
RE: Support for CO HB 25-1082

I write to you on behalf of Compassion & Choices in support of HB 25-1082. We thank you for your consideration of this important bill, which would improve the timeliness and efficiency of the death certificate signature process.

Compassion & Choices works to improve care, expand options and empower everyone to chart their own end-of-life journey. For more than 40 years, we have worked to change attitudes about death and dying, improve practices and policies, and educate communities so that everyone can access the full range of end-of-life care options.

In Colorado, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and Physician Assistants (PAs) are overseeing plans of care for dying patients, alongside physicians. They play a vital role in healthcare through the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of illnesses. They are qualified to diagnose conditions, interpret diagnostic tests, and manage chronic diseases. The Colorado End of Life Options Act includes Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) as attending providers. However, Colorado law does not allow APRNs or PAs to sign death certificates for their own patients (see CO 25-48-109).

Colorado's APRNs and PAs are graduate degree-prepared healthcare providers who have the skills, training, and knowledge within their scope of practice to complete death certificates for their own patients. Adding APRNs and PAs as death certificate signatories would resolve this significant regulatory burden for non-physician healthcare providers serving patients at the end of life. The amendment would also give a deceased person's family improved access to an accurately completed death certificate, which can be needed quickly for a patient's burial or cremation process and is vital for public health purposes.

Compassion & Choices supports this bill and encourages the Colorado legislature to pass it this session.

Sincerely,
Gina Schneider
Colorado Campaign Manager
Compassion & Choices