



**For Immediate Release** For more information: Beth Stephens (404) 525-1085  
[bstephens@georgiawatch.org](mailto:bstephens@georgiawatch.org)

### **Georgia Watch publishes policy report on Advanced Practice Registered Nursing**

ATLANTA, GA, JANUARY 8, 2015 - With a generous grant from the Georgia Health Foundation, Georgia Watch's Health Access Program studied the regulatory environment for advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) in Georgia. The [resulting policy report](#) outlines the state's regulatory framework and makes recommendations for how Georgia can better utilize its existing non-physician provider workforce based on successful models that exist elsewhere in the United States.

"Georgia's APRN practice laws are some of most restrictive in the nation. Georgia could enable APRNs to better serve patients and potentially lower healthcare costs for consumers by granting APRNs the authority to practice to the full extent of their education and training," said Health Access Program Director, Beth Stephens. "Georgia is facing a serious physician shortage, particularly in primary care, and APRNs have the training and expertise to fill these gaps in our healthcare system."

Georgia currently ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in the number of primary care doctors per capita. Over 80% of Georgia's counties contain substantial populations without a consistent source for primary care. Additionally, there are 63 counties without a single pediatrician, 79 without an OB/GYN, and 78 without a psychiatrist. More than 9,500 APRNs are currently licensed in Georgia.

"Georgia's outdated and restrictive APRN practice regulations do not align with national trends and inhibit the state's ability to meet the needs of a growing patient population. As one of the lowest scoring states in terms of overall health, Georgia can do more to encourage the ability of non-physician providers, like APRNs, to practice more autonomously, particularly in rural parts of the state, in order to ensure that Georgians have an adequate system of care," said Stephens.

Founded in 2002, Georgia Watch is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization advocating for consumers and patients in our state. Our mission is to empower and protect Georgia consumers on matters that impact their wallets and quality of life through education, advocacy and policy development. Georgia Watch's Health Access Program (HAP) seeks to ensure access to safe, quality and affordable healthcare for all Georgians.