

HB 244 -- COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE ARRANGEMENTS

SPONSOR: Rowland (155)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill expands the geographic proximity waiver for collaborative practice arrangements so that it no longer applies to just rural health clinics. It also removes the restriction limiting the waiver to only 28 days a year. This bill also increases the number of nurses a physician can enter into collaborative practice arrangements with from three to five.

This bill is the same as HB 1697 (2016).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that there are rural communities in this state that struggle to find doctors within the current 50 mile requirement to collaborate with an APRN. These are often the same communities that cannot entice a physician to practice within their boundaries, so that the residents are left without any access to a health care provider. This bill doesn't completely eliminate the mileage requirement for collaborative practice; it simply allows a physician to waive the requirement if he or she so chooses. The bill also allows a doctor to collaborate with up to five APRNs rather than just three to ensure more access to care in the communities currently facing a shortage.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Rowland; Missouri Nurses Association; and the Missouri Association of Rural Health Clinics.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that the current 50 mile requirement is reasonable and should not cause problems for most communities in this state. It is important that physicians are actively overseeing the care provided by their collaborating APRNs. The current collaborative practice requirements are in place, in part to prevent younger physicians from overextending themselves and to ensure that patients get the highest quality of care.

Testifying against the bill were the Missouri State Medical Association; Missouri Academy of Family Physicians; Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons; American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists-Missouri Section; and the Missouri Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons.