My name is Alice Kindschuh. A-L-I-C-E K-I-N-D-S-C-H-U-H.

I am speaking on behalf of myself. I do not represent my employer.

I am a licensed APRN-CNS and work as Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) in Nebraska. My primary employment is Director of Doctoral Studies, which includes Family and Adult Gerontology Nurse Practitioner tracks as well as an Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist track, at Nebraska Methodist College in Omaha. My purpose today is to help the Committee better understand advanced practice nursing education.

An advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) holds a Masters or Doctoral degree in nursing. All APRN educational programs include three fundamental core courses: advanced pathophysiology, advanced pharmacology, and advanced health assessment, in addition to courses specific for their role and patient population and practicum hours with a minimum requirement of 500 hours. Practicum hours vary by program and role.

All APRNs must pass a national certification exam for initial licensure and then recertify every 5 years to maintain their licensure. Certification renewal requirements include continuing education and practice hours. Self-directed, ongoing learning and professional development are essential to maintaining clinical competency for the practice role.

Students who enter an advanced practice program are licensed Registered Nurses (RNs) with a minimum of a Bachelor’s Degree in Nursing. Most students who enter Nebraska Methodist College’s Doctor of Nursing Practice program have at least 2-5 years of experience as a RN and continue to practice as a RN while in the program. Advanced practice nursing education builds on the existing skillset of a RN.

Advanced practice nurses are educated to care for patients with chronic disease and stable acute conditions. Advanced practice nurses are educated to treat health conditions but approach health in a holistic manner through an emphasis on the health and well-being of the whole person. Advanced practice registered nurses focus on more than disease, including the
concepts of health promotion, disease prevention, health education and counseling, in addition to simply treating health conditions.

Prescriptive authority requires the advance practice nurse as the prescriber to have a professional provider-patient relationship. This relationship involves an assessment and mutually acceptable treatment plan that must be documented in a medical record. While most people believe that prescriptive authority involves prescribing medications, it is much broader. Prescriptive authority extends to durable medical equipment, diagnostic testing, and prescribing a plan of care.

Advanced practice nursing education emphasizes autonomous and collaborative practice that includes accessing appropriate resources and referrals. Advanced practice nurses work in interdisciplinary health care teams that are focused on the needs of patients and their caregivers. Today’s healthcare workforce shares overlapping knowledge and skill sets. No one discipline owns any one aspect of care. Advanced practice registered nurses are prepared to provide safe, high quality, evidence-based patient care from the point of graduation. Thank you.

I am able to respond to questions.

Alice M. Kindschuh DNP, APRN-CNS, GCNS-BC