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Summary of Recommendations

This writer would like to express much concern about a nurse practitioner who is educated and Credentialed as a Family Nurse Practitioner having their duties modified to roles with a scope of practice that aligns with their current qualifications being the primary providers of psychiatric/mental health services to our veterans who deserve the benefit of highly qualified providers.

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Summary of Evidence Obtained from the Investigation

10. Scope of Practice Statement for Ms.Coish-How can Ms. Coish be legally identified as a Family And Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner without NLN approved training and national Certification in the area of psychiatric nursing?

11. Scope of Practice for Ms. Ryan- How can Ms. Ryan be legally indentified as an adult and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner without NLN approved training and national certification in the area of psychiatric nursing?

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Ms. Coish and Ms. Ryan were also prescribing psychotropic medications on an ongoing basis without being credentialed to do so.

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Although Ms. Coish met the requirements for prescribing controlled substances and had received a Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) number she opted to not utilize that authority therefore made no Identifiable contribution to the care of veterans. Additionally prescribing of control substances is not a Requirement for practice as a psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner nor is this option available for Nurse practitioners in all states.

Page 10 Paragraph 2

Multiple years of working in mental health facilities providing care as an Adult Health or Family Nurse Practitioner does not meet the standard for moving to being psychiatric/ mental health nurse practitioners.

Page 10 Paragraph 3

In response to the finding of Ms. Hood not recalling the conversation, this writer recalls the conversation with Ms. Hood to include Ms. Hood stating at the time that she would speak with another nurse practitioner whom she said she knew did clinical hours for certification one of the primary care clinics at the Ralph Johnson VAMC. The nurse practitioner Ms. Hood identified by name is known to this writer. This particular nurse practitioner held certifications by the American Nurses-Credentialing Center (ANCC) in both adult health and psychiatric/mental health nursing.

Page 10 paragraph 4

In response to the nurse manager's belief that this writer was questioning Ms. Coish's general credentialing is of concern because this writer had reviewed Ms. Coish's job application which included a copy of her certification as a family nurse practitioner *prior to serving as a member of the interview committee at the time of Ms. Coish's job interview. This is the information that led to this writer's continued concern about Ms. Coish being selected and allowed to work as a psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner with this population of severely and persistently mentally ill veterans. This writer went as far as asking Ms. Coish in the presence of the nurse manager if she was credentialed to prescribe psychotropic medications. This writer went to the extent of naming a specific psychotropic medication in an attempt for there not to be any ambiguity as to the nature of the question. At this meeting the nurse manager asked Ms. Coish to get her written verification of her certification which indicates competency for prescribing psychotropic medications.*

As the more senior psychiatric nurse practitioner in this program this writer was tasked with doing the nurses' orientation skills check list with nurses hired to work in a particular program. This writer declined taking the responsibility for doing peer prescribing proficiency for Ms. Coish due to continuing concerns related to this certification/practice issue.

This writer also takes issue with the fact that even though Ms. Coish has the same number of years as a nurse practitioner this writer has and works outside of her area of training and certification Ms. Coish has continually been paid at a much higher pay grade. Ms. Ryan who has at least ten years less nursing experience than this writer and also works outside of her area of training and certification as a nurse practitioner is paid at a higher pay grade than this writer. The unequal pay issue is of great concern as there has been no correction by management at the Ralph Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston, SC to align itself with the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act Pub.L.III-2,S.181.