Scope of Practice Decisions:
The Challenge and the Promise

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Explore with me how the scope of practice challenge is being addressed with 3 promising areas.
The Challenge
Scope of practice laws are state-based and politically driven...
...resulting in interprofessional tensions, interstate variability and unnecessary limitations on professional practice.
Best example of poor match in US is NPs
Nurse Practitioner Independence
US, 2008

Source: UCSF Center for the Health Professions, 2007-2008
Map showing the Dental Hygiene Prophylaxis Authority requirements by state. The map uses different colors to indicate whether a physical DDS is required, DDS not required, special conditions, or varies by setting. The data source is the American Dental Hygiene Association 2008.
3 Promising Directions
New models for evidence-based scope of practice decisions
Several states have new ways to help decide scope issues.
Minnesota’s Health Occupations Review Program informs legislators.

Iowa’s Reviewing Committees provide non-binding recommendations.

Ontario’s HPRA Council reviews scope of practice proposals.
Key to successful models are guiding principles.
UCSF analysis identified commonalities in successful models.

• Advisory only
• Credible
• Patient-focused
• Efficient
• Evidence-based
Expanded and overlapping scopes are correlated with increased access without compromised quality.
“...increases in professional practice in the 1990s improved access to care for underserved populations.”

Source: HRSA
Controlled studies find no quality compromises.
Evidence pyramid gives guidance.

- Meta-analyses
- Controlled trials
- Demonstrations
- Research studies
- Government data, OIG reports
- State laws & regulations
- Educational curricula, accreditation standards
- Survey articles, state studies
- Expert opinion, opinion pieces, anecdotes

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Piloting scope of practice changes before they become law
California’s Health Workforce Pilot Project permits scope of practice demonstrations.

- Est. 1972
- 170+ applications
- Affected NPA, DPA, Emergency Medical Services Act, etc.
- Short, controlled
3 Promising Directions for Data Collection
Collecting workforce data at licensing and renewal is easy and valuable.
Link short, focused surveys to relicensure.
Collect and manage the data electronically.
Standard data permit trend and comparison analyses.
Three regulatory changes could improve health care.

- Evidence-based Decisions
- Pilots
- Data
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