



Date: February 10, 2026

To: Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Committee

Re: Senate Bill 326 – Physician Assistants – Parity With Other Health Care Practitioners (Physician Assistant Parity Act of 2026)

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair, Beidle and Committee Members,

On behalf of LifeBridge Health, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 326 (SB 326). This legislation would update Maryland law to ensure that physician assistants (PAs) are treated with parity alongside other health care practitioners in key clinical and administrative functions. As introduced, SB 326 alters various provisions of current law to include PAs in actions such as guardianship admissions, emergency treatment programs, attendant care programs, and more—thereby removing outdated restrictions that limit PAs relative to similarly trained clinicians in Maryland.

LifeBridge Health is a large, integrated health system serving communities across Maryland. We rely on PAs every day to deliver high-quality, patient-centered care across inpatient, outpatient, surgical, specialty, and emergency settings. PAs are trained, licensed, and nationally certified clinicians who work collaboratively with physicians and other members of the health care team to expand access, improve outcomes, and enhance care continuity. Including PAs in the list of practitioners authorized to perform specific clinical and administrative functions helps address provider shortages, particularly in primary care, behavioral health, and underserved communities. PAs are essential members of the workforce who increase patient access while maintaining robust training standards and clinical oversight.

Current statutory language in multiple areas does not align with how health care teams' function in practice—where PAs routinely perform tasks consistent with their education, certification, and scope of practice. SB 326 brings statutory language into alignment with contemporary models of care, ensuring that law does not arbitrarily restrict practice or create unnecessary administrative barriers for patients and providers.

LifeBridge Health's care model emphasizes interdisciplinary collaboration. PAs work alongside physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, therapists, and others to coordinate patient care. SB 326 affirms the collaborative role of PAs as integral members of these teams, ensuring that they are recognized and empowered to contribute fully within their scope.

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While SB 326 aligns state law with modern clinical practice, it is equally important that health systems maintain clear, written policies assigning duties and responsibilities to PAs within hospital settings. LifeBridge Health has developed robust PA duty and supervision policies that reflect best practices in clinical governance. These policies help align individual clinician capabilities with hospital standards, support compliance with professional licensing requirements, and enhance patient outcomes across our system.

SB 326 is a patient-centered update to Maryland law that acknowledges the essential role of physician assistants in the state's health care delivery system. By providing PAs with parity where appropriate, this legislation supports access, quality, and efficient care for Maryland patients.

For these reasons, LifeBridge Health respectfully urges a favorable report on SB 326.

Thank you for your consideration.

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