

Theresa Neumann, PA-C
5426 Laurel Trail
St. Leonard, MD 20685

Date: March 12, 2023

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

**Bill: SB-674 Physician Assistant Parity Act
SB-673 Physician Assistant Modernization Act of 2023**

Position: Support

Honorable Madam Chair and Finance Committee Members,

I am asking you to support both SB 673 and SB 674 that are designed to modernize the PA practice statute and create an even playing field for PAs as they compete for jobs with other advanced healthcare providers.

As 29-year-veteran PA and a former Director of Legislative Affairs and President of the Maryland Academy of Physician Assistants, I have advocated for and experienced piecemeal advances to our practice statute over the past 22 years through frequent legislative initiatives; however, even with appreciating these small victories, Maryland has steadily fallen behind all other states with respect to the statutory and regulatory restrictions affecting how PAs function in the healthcare workforce. We are a well-educated and well-trained profession that meets vigorous standards in order to practice medicine in collaboration with our physician partners. We value and treasure that relationship, and, ultimately, when maximized, that collaborative effort offers patients improved outcomes while freeing the physician to attend to more complicated patients.

In times when we are facing healthcare shortages, we need to extend services to Maryland residents who need care, especially in underserved areas of the state. PAs can improve access to quality care and do so every day. They function in every field of medicine. Training is broad, as is the licensure/certification-maintenance process which allows PAs to mobilize to areas of need or choice. However, the antiquated laws governing practices that include verbiage such as “supervision” and distinction between “core” and “advanced duties” (the only state in the USA to do so), as well as the processes by which these must be approved, delay hiring of PAs for months, prevent certain practices from hiring PAs, and restrict PA practice in specialties, especially in Dermatology. Dermatologic PAs are restricted by administrative laws that are found no where in current PA statute; they are singled out as a unique entity, none of which was ever the intent of the statute revisions that occurred over the past 22 years.

Furthermore, with more PA-friendly neighboring states offering jobs to new PA graduates, Maryland is losing potential workforce. As a PA educator for the past 14 years, I can attest to the rigors of the educational process, the strict standards to which all PA programs must comply, and the quality of graduates from current state programs. I can also attest to the value we place in our physician and nurse practitioner colleagues, many of whom share similar training.

Please support a positive change in Maryland and vote favorably for SB 673 and SB 674.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Theresa Neumann", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Theresa Neumann, PA-C