

Bill: [SB0674 Parity with Other Health Care Practitioners \(Physician Assistant Parity Act of 2023\)](#)

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

Hearing Date: March 14, 2023

Committee: Finance

Witness: Tara Jernejcic, PA-C

Senator Carozza,

This is a letter in **Support of SB0674-PA Parity Act (Physician Assistant Parity Act of 2023)**.

On Tuesday, March 14, the Senate will hear SB0674, the PA Parity Act. This bill will provide inclusion of Maryland licensed physician assistants among other healthcare providers, already approved to take certain actions including, but not limited to, admitting individuals to mental health facilities and authenticating certificates of illness or disability for state employees.

As a practicing clinician and Clinical Director of Mount St. Mary's University Physician Assistant Program in development, I want to assure you, Senator Carozza, that the knowledge, ethics and critical thinking skills required to make decisions regarding the evaluation and management of patients in crisis, whether physical or behavioral, are integral to the education and practice as a physician assistant. During their 24+ month course of medical training, physician assistant students are required to develop entry-level professional proficiency of pathophysiologic and psychologic conditions which present a danger to self or others and the safe and proper disposition of such, including, but not limited to determining capacity to provide informed consent and involuntary admission to a mental health facility. Likewise, physician assistants are competent in making decisions regarding return to work after injury or illness and adherence to FMLA guidelines.

For example, current language surrounding MD. CODE ANN., HEALTH-GEN. § 10-622(b)(1) The petition for emergency evaluation of an individual may be made by:

- (i) A physician, psychologist, clinical social worker, licensed clinical professional counselor, clinical nurse specialist in psychiatric and mental health nursing, psychiatric nurse practitioner, licensed clinical marriage and family therapist, or health officer or designee of a health officer who has examined the individual;
- (ii) (ii) A peace officer who personally has observed the individual or the individual's behavior; or
- (iii) (iii) Any other interested person

As this language is exclusive of physician assistants, timely and efficient care of patients facing these crisis may be negatively impacted, as referral to approved practitioners is required. By allowing physicians to practice medicine within their training and scope, access to comprehensive health care is expanded to Maryland constituents and visitors.

In closing, I would like to thank you and the Committee for this opportunity to highlight our profession and would strongly encourage your support of SB0674 the PA Parity Act.

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