

HB 722 – Physician Assistants – Revisions
(Physician Assistant Parity)

Support Testimony of

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Madam Chair,

My name is Richard Rohrs and I have been a practicing PA in Maryland for 46 years. I currently serve as Assistant Vice President at LifeBridge Health. I have had the honor to have served as president of the American Academy of Physician Assistants, the National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistants, and the Maryland Academy of Physician Assistants. I have also served as a consultant to many countries around the world looking to create a PA model in their healthcare systems.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of this important bill which serves to clarify and correct many unintentional omissions in Statute. The full intent of existing and proposed PA practice statutes is to provide for full utilization of PAs as care providers in an already burdened healthcare system. Unfortunately, state law in many cases conflicts with this intent by creating exclusive laundry lists of who can and cannot perform certain tasks. Many of these lists were created out of sync with our practice act and therefore may not have included PAs.

In my role at NW Hospital I have overseen a large Hospitalist program which employs physicians, PAs, and NPs. One example of how this bill would remedy a situation is when determining competency of a patient. Currently, if we need consent for an important procedure on a patient and must determine if they are able to give informed consent, the PA, who is caring for and knows this patient the best, cannot sign as one of the two parties in making that determination. They must call a physician and an NP, who do not know the patient, to sign off on that decision. This is not just an inconvenience but often delays care.

A number of years ago we corrected many such oversights in statute with legislation. HB722 is just a continuation of that process to facilitate more efficient delivery of care in Maryland.

Thank you for your support.