

**Hearing Date:** March 6, 2023

**Committee:** Health and Government Operations

**Bill:** [HB727- Physician Assistants – Revisions \(Physician Assistant Modernization Act of 2023\)](#)

**Position:** SUPPORT (FAV)

This is a letter in **Support of HB 727- PA Modernization Act of 2023.**

My name is Jennifer Barnett, MPAS, PA-C, and have been practicing as a Physician Assistant for over 20 years in hospital medicine. I have been in leadership at both MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center and MedStar Harbor Hospitals and served for years on the Board of the Maryland Academy of Physician Assistants. I am proud to provide high-quality team-based care in collaboration with my physician colleagues. Collaboration is where the team utilizes all of its parts to the full extent of their training. Our current Physician Assistant Practice laws inappropriately restrict PA practice and compromise the strength of the team.

HB 727 is essential to modernize Physician Assistant practice in Maryland. Our current laws cause a significant administrative burden to the already burdened healthcare system. For example, when the supervising physician of our hospital medicine PAs left our organization, we suddenly had to find a new supervising physician, submit all new delegation agreements, and pay \$200 per PA, amounting to \$10,000. The physician and I spent valuable time obtaining delegation agreement signatures which took us away from patient care. PAs may only see the doctor who signed their delegation agreement every few months if at all. We collaborate with hundreds of physicians and other healthcare providers, not just one physician. Per the Joint Commission guidelines, I am re-credentialed every two years through the hospital which provides oversight of physician assistants as well as physicians and nurse practitioners. We provide team-based healthcare. These administrative hoops to go through increase administrative burden, increase costs, and can decrease access to care.

During the pandemic when our hospital system was exceedingly stretched, having the delegation agreement requirement with one physician caused additional barriers to care. When one of our sister hospitals was overburdened, PAs volunteered to go to the other hospitals with a high number of COVID patients. If their supervising physician was not also credentialed at the sister hospital, another delegation agreement, supervising physician signature, and an additional \$200 were required. This delayed the PA caring for sick COVID patients until the delegation agreement was received by the Board, which impacted patient care, and caused unnecessary delays and administrative burden.

Please support HB 727 and improve access to care, decrease administrative burden, and allow physician assistants to collaborate with physicians, and hospital systems. Collaboration is where the team utilizes all of its parts to the full extent of their training. Artificially restricting the skills of one group for the benefit of another compromises the strength of the team.

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