

**Hearing Date:** February 20, 2024

**Committee:** Finance/HGO

**Bill:** **SB0167/HB 806 – Physician Assistants – Revision (PA Modernization Act of 2024)**

**Position:** **SUPPORT (Favorable)**

I am writing in **SUPPORT** of **House Bill 806/Senate Bill 0167** to promote patient care access through the modernization of practice for qualified medical providers - physician assistants (PAs). I am a **PA, educator, and licensed mental health professional**.

As a clinician, I've worked in the behavioral health field for 15+ years, providing care to individuals, families, pediatric ages, adults, medically underserved populations, acute and chronic conditions. After practicing as a licensed counselor in Maryland for a number of years, I returned to school to evolve my career focus into medicine specifically because I was compelled to do more for these populations who are either under-resourced, fall in the gaps of qualifying for certain care, or who go through extraordinary measures just to access the care they do have. Despite my education, training, and expertise, it took an unreasonable amount of time (100+ hours), emails, phone calls, months of application processing time (including 2 levels of committee meetings, application review for approval/denial), acquiring letters of support and other documentation in excess to affirm my ability practice as I have been trained, certified, and licensed to do. I've also professionally had to assist with credentialing other PAs given the antiquated regulations that, unfortunately, have not been able to keep current with the present-day needs.

In areas where there is limited transportation, for instance, patients have taken several buses to attend follow-up appointments with me, and there were times when they struggled to even afford the cost of that public transit. The patient populations in Maryland and across the United States are desperate for care, many of whom suffer from complex medical conditions in addition to varying degrees of mental, emotional, and behavioral health needs. It is common for me to evaluate a patient during an appointment and recognize their need for care access or coordination with another provider, such as in primary care and women's health, and it take 5+ months to get an appointment scheduled. It's detrimental on a different level should they not then be able to attend that rare appointment. I've supported children and their families through trauma, homelessness, poverty, unemployment, school expulsion, and hard-fought preservation of their hope that change IS coming.

Access to care significantly hinges largely on the removal of barriers and supporting this bill advances both of those objectives for the betterment of our communities and populations. It does not change our duty as medical providers to serve equitably, ethically, compassionately, and responsibly.

As a PA, licensed mental health professional, educator, and advocate working directly with these populations of greatest need, I humbly request **favorable SUPPORT** of **Senate Bill 0167/House Bill 806**.

Thank you for your time, compassion, leadership, and commitment to service.



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