

Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk
House Health and Government Operations Committee
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: [HB 806](#) - Physician Assistants - Revisions (Physician Assistant Modernization Act of 2024)

Position: Favorable (Support)

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk:

I am writing to advocate for your support of HB 806, the PA Modernization Act. As a Physician Assistant (PA) since 2006, I have worked in several clinical settings. In 2019, I joined a local health department part-time and, with the onset of COVID-19, leveraged my training and experience to significantly expand my role in response to the pandemic. My diverse background complemented the existing medical team, illustrating the value PAs add by bringing specialized skills to healthcare settings. This approach—employing PAs with specific expertise to enhance care—is common in primary care and beyond, enabling practices to offer more comprehensive services.

Current regulations, however, unnecessarily restrict this model of care. Maryland’s unique requirement for a separate application for PAs to perform advanced duties imposes undue administrative burdens and limits patient care. The decision of a PA’s qualifications for advanced tasks is best made by the physician-PA team at the practice level, based on the PA's education, training, and experience, rather than through cumbersome regulatory processes. Removing advanced duties from only hospital settings fails to address the needs of underserved communities and will do little to impact extending emergency department wait times and boarding of patients.

Concerns that removing the advanced duties application will compromise patient safety are unfounded. A recent study comparing medical malpractice claims over a decade in states with varying PA practice laws found no significant difference in malpractice rates¹, underscoring the safety of allowing PAs to practice to the full extent of their capabilities. This evidence supports the daily practical experience that PAs, as integral team members, enhance the delivery of safe, high-quality care.

Therefore, I urge support of the PA Modernization Act, removing unnecessary barriers and enabling PAs to contribute to healthcare delivery more effectively across the state.

I sincerely appreciate your time and consideration and hope that you **support the passage of the HB 806- PA Modernization Act.**

Best,



Deanna Bridge Najera, MPAS, PA-C, DFAAPA

Deanna.Bridge@gmail.com

301-639-2070 (cell)

- 1- Sondra M. DePalma, Michael DePalma, Sean Kolhoff, Noël E. Smith; Medical Malpractice Payment Reports of Physician Assistants/Associates Related to State Practice Laws and Regulations. *Journal of Medical Regulation* 12 December 2023; 109 (4): 27–37. Available at <https://meridian.allenpress.com/jmr/article/109/4/27/498933/Medical-Malpractice-Payment-Reports-of-Physician>