



PA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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PAEAonline.org • 703-548-5538

February 15, 2024

Senator Mary Beth Carozza
316 James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Kenneth Kerr
209 Lowe House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Carozza and Delegate Kerr:

On behalf of the PA Education Association (PAEA), the national organization representing all 306 accredited PA programs in the United States, we are writing to express the Association's strong support for SB0167 and HB0806. These bills would significantly improve patient access to care by modernizing outdated administrative barriers for PAs in Maryland while preserving interprofessional, team-based practice. As such, the Association urges the Maryland legislature to support their swift enactment.

Throughout the history of the profession, PA programs have prepared students to both practice at the top of their license and to value the unique skill sets and contributions of each member of the health care team. For this reason, PAEA endorsed the final Optimal Team Practice policy adopted by the American Academy of PAs in 2017 which included a commitment to collaboration **determined at the practice level** based upon the experiences, skills, and capabilities of specific PAs. State limitations on PA practice that arbitrarily impose administrative restrictions on PA practice without regard to clinical expertise only serve to impose delays in patient care at a time of growing health care workforce shortages.

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As Maryland lawmakers consider practice modernization legislation, it is critical that state law reflect the extent and quality of education PA programs provide to students. For example, an issue raised as SB0167 and HB0806 have been drafted has been the capacity of PA graduates to order and interpret diagnostic studies. All PA programs are required by their accrediting body to include curricular content focused on interpreting diagnostic studies with a full 12% of items on the national certifying exam assessing this skill set per the most recent PANCE blueprint.¹ Based upon the comprehensive training that PA graduates receive, PAEA opposes any arbitrary distinctions and documentation requirements in state law that are not premised upon a PA's education, experience, and capacity, such as state-imposed differentiation between core and advanced duties for PA practice.

The policy changes proposed by SB0167 and HB0806 will allow PAs to be more easily employed at health care facilities throughout the state, reduce the possibility of patients losing access to care provided by PAs in the event of the unexpected departure of a supervising physician, and ultimately ensure better outcomes for all patients. For this reason, SB0167 and HB0806 have PAEA's strong support, and we look forward to opportunities to promote its enactment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Association's position on SB0167 and HB0806. Should you have specific questions or if you would like additional information, please contact Senior Director of Government Relations Tyler Smith at 703-667-4356 or tsmith@PAEAonline.org.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Nicole B. Burwell in black ink.

Nicole Burwell, PhD, MSHS, PA-C
President

Handwritten signature of Sara F. Fletcher in black ink.

Sara Fletcher, PhD
Chief Executive Officer

¹ National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants. (2024). *PANCE Content Blueprint*. <https://www.nccpa.net/become-certified/pance-blueprint/>.