



**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

655 K Street NW, Ste. 700, Washington, DC 20001

PAEAonline.org • 703-548-5538

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July 11, 2018

The Honorable Jack Reed  
United States Senate  
728 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
United States Senate  
260 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Reed and Blunt:

On behalf of the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA), representing the 235 accredited PA education programs in the United States, we are writing to thank you for your introduction of S. 3095, the Building a Health Care Workforce for the Future Act. At a time of increasing demands on our national health workforce, this legislation includes a number of constructive proposals that would enable PA and other health professions education programs to prepare a high-quality workforce to meet the nation's health care needs. We are committed to supporting your offices in advancing this legislation and would like to offer specific comments on the following provisions:

**Grants to States for Scholarship Programs**

PAEA strongly supports the proposed authorization of new grants to be awarded to states to facilitate investment in students and health professions education. This bill would require that states awarded funding through this grant program match federal contributions dollar-for-dollar, significantly expanding the potential impact of this investment. Further, we are encouraged by this provision's acknowledgement of the value of directing students to primary care practice through its requirement that no less than 50 percent of appropriated funds be allocated to students intending to practice in primary care. **While PAs are described as eligible professionals for this program, we would advocate for textual clarity that PA programs are eligible health professions programs in which students may be enrolled for the purposes of this section.**

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### **Grants for Priority Competency Development**

PAEA is similarly supportive of the authorization of grants for priority competency development proposed by S. 3095. The identified competencies proposed in the legislation — ranging from integrated primary and mental health care to improving the care delivered in underserved communities — are key priorities for PA programs across the country and are in alignment with PAEA’s fundamental values. We believe that this authorization presents significant potential to improve the quality of education provided to students, and we are appreciative that this provision was included in the legislation.

### **Clinical Documentation Requirements**

One of the most pressing concerns to PA programs throughout the United States is the shortage of clinical training sites for students. Because this shortage limits the capacity of programs to expand and meet workforce demand, one of PAEA’s top priorities has been to eliminate bureaucratic barriers to the recruitment and maintenance of clinical preceptors. We are highly encouraged that current burdensome clinical documentation requirements are addressed in S. 3095 through the requirement of a study to be conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services and the National Academy of Medicine.

**We would strongly advocate for this study to include an analysis of the impact of current documentation requirements on the willingness of practicing clinicians to serve as preceptors.**

Once again, we thank you for your leadership in introducing this legislation and look forward to opportunities to collaborate with your offices to facilitate its advancement. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Chief Policy and Research Officer Dave Keahey at [dkeahey@PAEAonline.org](mailto:dkeahey@PAEAonline.org) or 703-667-4339.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Mustone Alexander".

Lisa Mustone Alexander, EdD, MPH, PA-C  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timi Agar Barwick".

Timi Agar Barwick, MPM  
Chief Executive Officer