



PA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

655 K Street NW, Ste. 700, Washington, DC 20001
PAEAonline.org • 703-548-5538

April 19, 2024

Senator Cindy Friedman
24 Beacon St.
Room 313
Boston, MA 02133

Representative John Lawn
24 Beacon St.
Rom 236
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Friedman and Representative Lawn:

On behalf of the PA Education Association (PAEA), the national organization representing all 309 accredited PA programs in the United States, we are writing to express the Association's strong support for S.1354, *An Act Relative to Removing Barriers to Care for Physician Assistants*. This bill would significantly improve patient access to care by modernizing outdated administrative barriers to practice for PAs in Massachusetts while preserving interprofessional, team-based practice, which is core to the PA profession. The bill would remove the requirement that PAs file a supervising physician with the Commonwealth while retaining the ability of healthcare facilities to require this at the practice level and would not grant independent practice or otherwise change the scope of PA practice. As such, the Association urges the Health Care Financing Committee to issue a favorable report for S.1354.

Throughout the profession's history, PA programs have prepared students to 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 laws regarding PA practice that arbitrarily impose administrative barriers without regard to what's best for

2024 PAEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nicole Burwell, PhD, MSHS, PA-C
PRESIDENT

Dipu Patel, DMSc, MPAS, PA-C
PRESIDENT ELECT

Linda Sekhon, DHSc, PA-C
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Shalon Buchs, MHS, PA-C
SECRETARY

Jacqueline S. Barnett, DHSc, MSHS, PA-C
TREASURER

Jennifer Eames, DHSc, MPAS, PA-C
TREASURER

Elizabeth Elliott, MS, PA-C
DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Karen Graham-Burnet, PhD, PA-C
DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Shaun Grammer, DMSc, PA-C
DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Daytheon Sturges, PhD, MPAS, PA-C
DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Virginia Valentin, DrPH, PA-C
DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Alison Streeter, MEd
STUDENT MEMBER AT LARGE

Sara Fletcher, PhD
EX OFFICIO MEMBER



health care facilities and the patients they serve only serve to impose delays in patient care at a time of growing health care workforce shortages.

As Massachusetts lawmakers consider practice modernization legislation, it is critical that state law reflect the extent and quality of education that PA programs provide to students. PA education is based upon rigorous accreditation standards that require a comprehensive classroom-based education for students covering anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, physical diagnosis, behavioral sciences, and medical ethics, followed by nearly 2,000 hours of clinical rotations in an array of specialties and practice sites. Following the completion of this curriculum, PA graduates are required to pass a national certifying examination prior to obtaining a state license to practice. Based upon the comprehensive training that PA graduates receive, their role within a team-based health care model, and the realities of health care system needs, PAEA opposes any arbitrary documentation requirements in state law that limit PA ability to practice at the top of their license.

The commonsense policy change proposed by S.1354 will allow PAs to be more easily employed, as well as redeployed to areas of need, 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Association's position on S.1354. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole B. Burwell".

Nicole Burwell, PhD, MSHS, PA-C
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara F. Fletcher".

Sara Fletcher, PhD
Chief Executive Officer