

[SB0167] and [HB806]– Physician Assistants – Revisions (Physician Assistant Modernization Act of 2024)

Support Testimony of Cathy Jewell, Concerned Citizen
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Good afternoon, members of the House and Senate and subcommittees,

My name is Cathy Jewell, and I am writing in support of SB 0167 and HB 0806 - Physician Assistant Modernization Act of 2024 legislation put forth by the Maryland Academy of Physician Assistants (MdAPA). As a concerned citizen, I can personally attest to the invaluable role Physician Assistants (PAs) play as an integral part of the healthcare system. From my experience, what sets PA's apart from other licensed healthcare providers are 3 things:

1. The degree to which they provide greater accessibility to healthcare.
2. Their ability to actively listen efficiently and effectively.
3. Their collaborative approach to patient care and education.

My first experience with a PA was over 20 years ago when I was not able to get an appointment with my regular Primary Care Physician. Initially, I had no intention of routinely seeing the PA over the physician, but because of all the reasons stated above, I would chose to stay with the PA and am still seeing her today. Her recommendations and referrals have been spot on which led me to my next PA experience. Although her referral was to a top-notch gynecologist, who I initially saw and loved, it was difficult to get regular appointments with her. In short order I switched to the GYN PA and am still with her today. She too demonstrates those 3 key assets in providing quality and accessible care. Both PA's have enabled me to better navigate the healthcare system and to take greater ownership and authority over my own healthcare. Recently I have added 2 more PA's to my healthcare team—in ENT and a Dermatology.

There is no question in my mind that the option of having a PA has given me timely access to quality healthcare. I am truly grateful for this but sadly this is not the case for others. I hear from family and friends the difficulty of finding a healthcare provider and/or getting an appointment in a timely manner. It is my understanding that there exist administrative barriers when hiring PAs in Maryland causing undue costs and burdens for hospitals and other healthcare facilities. The proposed legislation focuses on removal of these administrative barriers, which delay the employment and utilization of well-trained, compassionate PAs, who can provide greater access to quality healthcare and help to alleviate the significant shortage in healthcare providers.

I ask that you support and enact this legislation on behalf of all citizens and communities in the State of Maryland.

Thank you for your time and commitment to Maryland,

Cathy Jewell