



What is a Physician Assistant (PA)?

- ❖ PAs are nationally certified medical providers who diagnose illness, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and often serve as a patient's primary healthcare provider.
- ❖ PAs are recognized as qualified primary care providers by: CMMS, The ACA, and MDH's Health Healthcare Home Certification program.
- ❖ PAs practice in every state and in every medical setting and specialty, improving healthcare access and quality.
- ❖ **The care provided by PAs is proven to be high quality, safe and cost effective.**

What are the Concerns that Warrant Legislative Action?

1. **Limitations to access to care** Numerous evidence based, large scale studies validate the safety, positive care outcomes and cost effective impact PAs have in healthcare. Yet despite the facts, misunderstanding regarding the supervisory requirements of PA practice limits PAs abilities to practice the full extent of our education, training, and experience, resulting in decreased access to care for patients. Burdensome paperwork causes unnecessary delays in PAs entering practice which reduces access to care for patients.
2. **Limitations for rural and underserved care access** PAs are trained with a focus on primary care. Current PA practice restrictions that require a single physician to supervise a PA limits the ability of PAs to meet the care needs in underserved and rural areas. Physicians are increasingly reluctant to take on the liability of another profession required by the supervisory relationship, which prohibits PAs ability to seek out rural practice.
3. **Significant disparity in employment opportunities** Over the last 3 years there has been a considerable change in healthcare hiring regarding NPs and PAs, as a results of the NPs achieving independent practice. Despite PAs and NPs filling similar roles in the healthcare environment the disparity of practice restrictions limits PAs in the eyes of hiring authorities. Removing the supervisory language from the PA practice statute would allow PAs to be on par with our NP colleagues– which will translate to better access to care for the patients of MN.

What Impact do PAs have on Healthcare in MN?

- ❖ There are over 3,000 PAs licensed in MN and 4 schools, with a 5th in development at Mayo
 - ❖ That's ~150 practice ready PAs being trained annually in MN ready to meet the care needs of our state.
- ❖ 12.3% of Minnesota PAs practice in rural areas
- ❖ **In MN, PAs provide care to over 10 million patients annually.**

PA Training

PAs are trained at the graduate level and complete more than 2,000 hours of supervised clinical education prior to graduation, which is second only to physicians among all healthcare professions.

- PA education is modeled after medical school curriculum and is overseen by physician academic medical directors. Comprehensive master's degree programs provide PAs with a broad, generalist medical education, with a unique clinical focus that allows them to be adaptable to any practice settings.

**Modernization of MN PA practice laws will improve
access to team-based care.**

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION SUPPORTING MODERNIZING PA PRACTICE REGULATION

❖ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of the Treasury, U.S. Department of Labor

2019 healthcare workforce report - *Reforming America's Healthcare Through Choose and Competition*
States should consider eliminating requirements for rigid collaborative practice and supervision agreements between physicians and ... their care extenders (e.g., physician assistants...) that are not justified by legitimate health and safety concerns. Pg41.

Improving efficiency in the healthcare system: removing anti-competitive barriers for advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants. The Hamilton Project. Policy brief 2018-08. June 2018. http://www.hamiltonproject.org/assets/files/AM_PB_0608.pdf. Accessed August 22, 2018.

❖ Federal Trade Commission

FTC Staff Comments to the Iowa Board of Physician Assistants on Proposed New Rules: 645—327.8: Definition of Physician Supervision of a Physician Assistant (2016). https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/advocacy_documents/ftc-staff-comment-professional-licensure-division-iowa-department-public-health-regarding-proposed/v170002_ftc_staff_comment_to_iowa_dept_of_public_health_12-21-16.pdf. Accessed August 22, 2018 (regarding physician assistants).

“...patients would likely benefit if physician assistants (PAs) in Iowa can practice with as few restrictions as possible, consistent with their education, training, skills, and experience. PAs can provide more choice among health care providers, leading to more accessible, affordable, safe, and effective health care.”

❖ Research

COMPARISON OF QUALITY OF CARE FOR NPS, PAS AND PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS

Kurtzman, E. & Barnow, B. (2017) A Comparison of Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, and Primary Care Physicians' Patterns of Practice and Quality of Care in Health Centers, *Med Care* 2017; 00; 000

Summary: Analysis of 23,704 patient visits during a 5 period compared the care delivery of NPs, PAs and Primary Care MDs in a community health center. Study comparisons suggests that NP and PA care were largely comparable to Primary Care MD care.

❖ National Rural Health Association Policy - Brief Published July 2017

Physician Assistants: Modernize Laws to Improve Rural Access – direct policy verbiage

- “Physician Assistants (“PAs”) are one of three professions providing primary care in the United States, along with physicians and advanced practice registered nurses. The National Rural Health Association (NRHA) recognizes that, despite 50 years of high-quality cost-effective practice, there remain state and federal laws and regulations that prevent PAs from practicing to the fullest extent of their education and experience.”
- “Rural patients would particularly benefit from updated laws allowing practices to decide an individual PA’s scope; eliminate legal requirements for PAs to have a specific relationship with a physician in order to practice and leave decisions about the necessary level of collaboration with a physician up to each practice.”
- “Team practice—with the ability to make referrals or collaborate and consult with physicians—is central to PA practice. However, state laws that require a PA to have a specific association with a designated physician or group of physicians limits both PAs and physicians, which are constraints rural communities cannot afford.”