



**PA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

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February 10, 2023

Senator Erin Tobin  
Chair, Senate Health and Human Services Committee  
South Dakota Senate  
500 E Capitol Ave., Room 412  
Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Dear Chairwoman Tobin:

On behalf of the PA Education Association (PAEA), the national organization representing all 300 accredited PA programs in the United States, we are writing to reiterate the Association's position on Optimal Team Practice for practicing PAs in response to ongoing mischaracterizations by external stakeholders. As the South Dakota legislature considers SB 175, a bill which would meaningfully expand access to high-quality care for patients through the elimination of outdated administrative barriers restricting PA practice, we would like to emphasize the Association's strong support for the legislation.

In a recent communication to their membership concerning SB 175, the South Dakota State Medical Association again asserted, "Even the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) - the very organization that represents physician assistant educational programs in the U.S. - has criticized the national effort to remove PA requirements for supervision and collaboration." As the Association stated in a previous letter to the South Dakota Senate Health and Human Services Committee sent on February 8, 2022, as well as in other

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communications, this assertion is not an accurate reflection of PAEA's position on the OTP policy passed by the American Academy of PAs (AAPA) House of Delegates in 2017. Concerns previously raised by the Association, which were elaborated upon in the subsequently issued Core Competencies for New Physician Assistant Graduates, focused specifically on the needs of new graduates entering clinical practice - not those of experienced PAs that, as expected, improve their skills and autonomy over time. The language of the adopted OTP policy pertaining to collaboration with other members of the health care team addressed these concerns focused specifically on new graduates, leading to PAEA's strong support.

Throughout the history of the profession, collaboration with other members of the health care team has been a cornerstone of both PA education and practice and a critical component of ensuring high-quality care for patients. For this reason, as a component of the broader policy, OTP includes a commitment to collaboration **determined at the practice level** based upon the experiences, skills, and capabilities of specific PAs. Based upon both the unnecessary administrative barriers created when collaboration with a specific physician is mandated by state law and the continued commitment to the value of team-based care stated specifically in the policy, PAEA was proud to endorse the final iteration of OTP passed by the AAPA House of Delegates in 2017.

SB 175 reflects the aims of the OTP policy adopted by AAPA by eliminating the requirement for a practice agreement with a specific supervising physician after the completion of 2,080 practice hours. This change will allow PAs to be more easily employed at health care facilities throughout the state, eliminate 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 while PAs continue to collaborate with other members of the health care team. For these reasons, PAEA supports SB 175 and urges the legislature to pass this critical legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to again clarify the Association's position on SB 175. 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](mailto:tsmith@PAEAonline.org).



Sincerely,

*Linda Sekhon*

Linda Sekhon, DHSc, PA-C  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara P. Fletcher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S' and a distinct 'P'.

Sara Fletcher, PhD  
Chief Executive Officer