

March 27, 2024

The Honorable Sherman Packard
Speaker of the House
New Hampshire House of Representatives
70 Old Derry Road
Londonderry, NH 03053-2218

The Honorable Matthew Wilhelm
House Democratic Leader
New Hampshire House of Representatives
100 Magnolia Road
Manchester, NH 03104-1606

Re: **AMA Oppose New Hampshire HB 1222**

Dear Speaker Packard and Representative Wilhelm:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to express our **strong opposition to House Bill (HB) 1222**. This bill removes all language requiring physician assistants to collaborate with physicians, thereby allowing physician assistants to practice medicine without any physician involvement. This is a dangerous bill that sets New Hampshire apart from almost every other state in the nation and walks back collaborative practice language that this legislature just recently passed. Equally important—it is not what patients want. **In a recent AMA survey, 95 percent of U.S. voters agree physicians should be involved in their medical diagnoses and treatment decisions.** Patients want and expect the most educated and highly trained health care professional to be involved in their care. As such, we strongly encourage you to stand up for patients and vote “no” HB 1222.

Physician assistants are valuable members of the physician-led health care team, but they are not a replacement for a physician.

The AMA has long valued the commitment of physician assistants to the team-based model of care, and greatly respects the contributions physician assistants make to the health care team. The AMA is deeply concerned that HB 1222 eliminates physicians from the care team. In so doing, HB 1222 sets New Hampshire apart from most of the country, including 26 states that currently require physician supervision of physician assistants, 20 states that require physician collaboration, and one state that requires a practice agreement. The demolition of physician-led teams proposed by this bill is unprecedented and not in the best interest of patients. As the provision of health care in this country becomes more complex, a fully coordinated, quality-focused and patient-centered health care team will be the optimal means by which Americans will receive their health care. In the physician-led team approach, each member of the team plays a critical role in delivering efficient, accurate, and cost-effective care to patients. The AMA is committed to helping all members of the health care team work together in a coordinated, efficient manner to achieve the triple aim in health care: ensure that New Hampshire’s patients receive the highest quality of health care, at the lowest cost, resulting in the most optimal clinical outcomes. Simply put, HB 1222 is contrary to this goal.

Scope of practice for any health care professional should be based on standardized, adequate training, and demonstrated competence in patient care. The well-proven pathways of education and training for physicians include medical school and residency, and years of caring for patients under the expert

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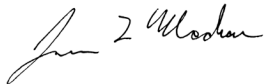
guidance of medical faculty. Physicians complete more than 10,000 hours of clinical education and training during their four years of medical school and three-to-seven years of residency training. By sharp contrast, the current physician assistant education model is two years in length with 2,000 hours of clinical care—and it includes no residency requirement. The physician assistant education model assumes that in practice, physician assistants will engage in supervision by, or collaboration with, a physician.

Moreover, many physician assistants may not anticipate the degree of independent practice provided by this bill. Many physician assistant students are under the impression that upon graduation they will be practicing under a high degree of physician collaboration, which may decrease as they gain experience. In fact, Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) data indicate that 91 percent of physician assistant students nearing graduation described the collaborating physician relationship as “essential” or “very important.” The AMA agrees, and as such, strongly encourages the New Hampshire House of Representatives to vote “no” on HB 1222.

In short, physician assistants are valuable members of the health care team, but they are not a replacement for a physician. We implore you to maintain the current commonsense collaboration requirements found in New Hampshire law—language that was just recently passed by this very legislature—and vote “no” on HB 1222.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Horvath, JD, Senior Attorney, AMA Advocacy Resource Center, at kimberly.horvath@ama-assn.org.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD

cc: New Hampshire Medical Association