HB 353 Proponent Testimony
House Health Committee
Chair Jean Schmidt
October 22, 2025

Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 353.

My name is Dawn Sodders, and I am a Master's-educated Physician Assistant practicing orthopedics. I reside in Pierce Township, Clermont County. I hold an MPAS degree and PA-C certification, representing the rigorous training that qualifies me to provide comprehensive patient care. I am writing this testimony as both a healthcare provider and an Ohio resident who has witnessed firsthand how the current title of Physician Assistant creates unnecessary barriers to efficient, high-quality patient care.

Ohio's proposed title change from "physician assistant" to "physician associate" via HB 353 addresses a fundamental communication problem that affects patient care daily. When I introduce myself to patients as a physician assistant, I regularly encounter confused looks. Some patients have literally asked if I "get the doctor coffee." This misunderstanding isn't merely about professional respect, it directly impacts patient confidence and care quality.

Other professions provide instructive parallels, where "assistants" handle clerical work while "associates" practice the craft. Patients may apply this same logic to healthcare and give less credence to providers with "assistant" in their title, regardless of their actual qualifications and capabilities.

Supporting the title change helps retain Ohio-educated PAs by creating a practice environment that reflects our actual role and capabilities. When providers feel valued and can practice efficiently, they're more likely to remain in Ohio rather than relocating to states with more favorable practice conditions.

I urge this committee to support HB 353 changing our professional title to "physician associate." This change would yield immediate benefits: clearer patient communication, improved provider satisfaction, and better alignment between our training and our professional identity.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted, Dawn Sodder, MPAS, PA-C