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, my name is Kelly Thobe. I am a certified Physician Assistant and faculty with the University of Dayton's PA Program. Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony in support of efforts to strengthen Ohio's healthcare workforce through HB 353, the PA Title Change bill.

Physician Assistants are medically trained advanced practice providers who diagnose and treat patients, perform physical exams, order diagnostics, prescribe medications, and assist in surgery. We are educated in the medical model and trained to function as part of a collaborative care team. Our training allows us to serve patients across all medical specialties and in every clinical setting, from primary care to surgical services.

PA programs in Ohio follow a rigorous curriculum spanning approximately 27 months and including more than 2,000 hours of supervised clinical training. Ohio is a leader in PA education. With 17 PA programs, we have one of the highest concentrations of PA training institutions in the country, and we should do all we can to retain this talent right here in Ohio as students graduate. But to do so, we must continue to support policies to improve PA practice in the state.

One such area of support is professional identity. While the legal title remains "Physician Assistant," our national professional organization has adopted the title "Physician Associate" to better reflect the depth of our training, clinical responsibilities, and the modern role we play in patient care. The term "assistant" is often misunderstood by patients and even colleagues, and does not accurately capture the level of medical decision-making PAs bring to healthcare teams.

As an educator, I support this transition because clarity in our title improves patient understanding and trust. With a professional title that aligns with our education and expertise, we can ensure Ohio-educated PA school graduates stay and serve where they are needed most.

Thank you for your time and for your consideration of this testimony.