



**Ohio Association of Physician Assistants Proponent Testimony**  
**S.B. 259—PAs**  
**House Health Committee**  
**November 28, 2018**

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony to you today regarding S.B. 259. My name is Josanne Pagel and I am providing this testimony on behalf of the Ohio Association of Physician Assistants (“OAPA”). I serve as OAPA’s Government Affairs Director. OAPA represents the physician assistant (“PA”) profession in Ohio. Serving over 3,000 licensed PAs and almost 1,000 PA students, OAPA seeks to promote quality, cost-effective, accessible health care, and to promote the professional and personal development of PAs with the organization.

I am also the Executive Director of PA Services at the Cleveland Clinic Health System and a clinical associate professor at the Case Western Reserve School of Medicine.

In my role as Executive Director, I oversee the largest population of physician assistants (“PAs”) in Ohio. I witness, first hand, the impact laws and regulations have on PAs. It is important that Ohio’s laws support patient access to high-quality healthcare and allow PAs to practice at the height of their training and experience. Some of our state’s laws greatly inhibit these goals, preventing PAs from providing care for patients at the highest possible level. PAs diagnose illness; develop and manage treatment plans; prescribe medications; and often, serve as a patient’s principal healthcare provider.

PAs are passionate about providing the highest quality of healthcare to patients, but overly burdensome laws, regulations, and administrative paperwork can deter the profession from moving forward and keeping up with the rapidly changing healthcare industry.

OAPA supports S.B. 259 because it will streamline administrative procedures for PAs in Ohio, make technical corrections, and provide statutory relief to ensure that PAs are able to act to the fullest extent of their licensure and training. Most importantly, S.B. 259 maintains the safeguards under current law to ensure quality patient care and continues to support the relationship between PAs and their supervising physicians.

S.B. 259 allows PAs to practice at the full scope of their training and experience by removing certain regulatory barriers. Notably, the bill makes the following key improvements:

- Increases the ratio of PAs supervised by a physician at any one time from three to five;
- Streamlines the process for PAs who move to Ohio from another state and wish to continue practicing in Ohio; and

- Eliminates an antiquated formulary in Ohio law to allow PAs and physicians to collaborate on the best treatment and medication prescribed for patients, including permitting PAs to perform rapid intubation and procedural sedation in a health care facility.

Finally, we applaud the State Medical Board for pursuing an amendment in a different bill to allow supervision agreements to be stored on-site with a supervising physician and not require filing with the board. This has already created procedural efficiencies for PAs practicing in Ohio. We support this move to reduce paperwork and unnecessary duplication on the part of the Board. At this time, we oppose any other amendments to this bill in the interest of time.

There are other issues which still limit access to quality patient care by PAs. We worked through some of these issues in interested parties meetings in the Senate, and compromised greatly to get to where we are today. We look forward to continuing our work with this committee and those legislators dedicated to improving medical care quality, access, and efficiency in Ohio.

Ohio is home to some of the best PAs in the country. While the PA profession is not easy, it is extremely rewarding. PAs want to provide the best possible health care to Ohioans. However, the current regulatory scheme surrounding the PA profession can be greatly improved. S.B. 259 will allow PAs to practice at the full capacity of their training and experience, while cutting through unnecessary red tape.

There are more than 3,000 PAs in Ohio that are a critical part of the healthcare workforce in our state. S.B. 259 will help improve the quality of care for patients in Ohio by allowing PAs, physicians, and other healthcare providers to decide what is best for their patients.

Thank you so much for allowing me to testify before you today in support of S.B. 259. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee might have.