

Ohio Association of Physician Assistants
Proponent Testimony for Senate Bill 81

February 6, 2024

Chair Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony for S.B. 81. The Ohio Association of Physician Assistants (OAPA) supports this common-sense proposal that allows Physician Assistants, and other advanced practice providers, to sign certain documents related to admission or discharge from a hospital or treatment.

Consistent with OAPA’s mission to promote quality, cost-effective, accessible health care, S.B. 81 will improve patient experiences and outcomes by expanding access to care through improving and reducing processing time for patients. While this proposal represents a small change, it represents a good reminder that even minute improvements to processes can pay big dividends, particularly in health care.

Last, we are aware that a question arose during sponsor testimony regarding parity between advanced practice providers. OAPA supports parity amongst providers, where appropriate based on training, state law and regulations, and the appropriate hospital policies.

PAs and APRNs work side by side taking care of patients in all areas of health care facilities. Their professional educational paths may be different, their treatment protocols, privileging and outcomes are the same.

Below is a chart that highlights (not completely inclusive) the similarities and differences in training and regulations:

Comparison of APRN/PA profession	PA	APRN
Education	PA programs housed in school of medicine/Health professions	APRN programs housed in schools of nursing
Curriculum	Medicine focused curriculum follows medical school programs: taught by physicians and PAs	Advanced practice nursing education taught by nursing
Length	Programs are 24 to 34 months Full time study	Programs are 24 months may be part time/full time
Clinical hours	Greater than 2,000 hrs. of clinical education in program	800 to 1,000 hours of clinical education
Degree given	Masters	Masters
Other degrees	Continuing education offers doctorate programs after initial education	Continuing education offers doctorate programs after initial education

Certification	1 national certifying body for general practice	5 areas of certification for specific practice
Licensing	Licensed and governed by the State Medical Board	Licensed and governed by the state nursing board
Practice areas	All disciplines of medicine and surgical practices	Mostly in all medicine practices, few practice in surgical practices
Laws	Supervision by physicians; direct, indirect and autonomous	Collaborative practice with collaborative agreement with physicians

In fact, when the bill was introduced, PAs were not included in S.B. 81 and were amended into bill after raising that omission with the bill sponsor and members of the Senate Health Committee. OAPA would be happy to work with this committee on additional amendments providing appropriate parity amongst advanced practice providers.

We thank Sen. Romanchuk for sponsoring the bill and look forward to working with the committee as the bill progresses.