PA Practice Reform and Optimal Team Practice Fact Sheet
Prepared by the Washington Academy of Physician Assistants
Legislative Committee
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PAs are well trained

- PAs practice as health care providers before they apply to PA schools in the Pacific Northwest.
- PA programs provide over 3000 hours of didactic and clinical training.
- Once licensed, PAs complete the same CME as physicians—50 hours/year.

PAs are over-regulated in Washington State

- Every PA must have a delegation agreement with a physician which must be filed with and reviewed by the Medical Quality Assurance Commission (MQAC) or the Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery (BOMS).
- PAs must be supervised by physicians to practice.
- Supervision may be defined as direct, indirect, or remote, and is confusing to health organization administrators.
- Physicians may not supervise more than five PAs.
- None of these requirements apply to any other health care practitioners.

PAs face barriers in the healthcare workforce

- Employers find it easier to hire and manage other medical practitioners because they can work without delegation agreements or supervision.
- Many physicians don’t want the burden of supervising PAs or liability for their work.
- Physicians are more likely to be employees than employers—they no longer have the incentives they did in the past to accept the burden and liability of PA supervision.

PA restrictions are not needed to assure quality care

- PAs provide the same quality of care as physicians and other health care practitioners.
- Most PAs practice in a highly autonomous way, just as physicians and other health care practitioners.
- Early career PAs as well as PAs switching specialities would practice team-based medicine under the supervision of a physician as in the case with other new qualified medical professionals. This supervisory agreement should be determined at the practice level, not as a requirement by state law.
PAs remain deeply committed to team practice with physicians

- 96% of PAs surveyed remain committed to practicing on a team with physicians.\(^1\)
- Optimal Team Practice (OTP) does NOT mean independent practice. PAs would continue to collaborate with our physician colleagues and other qualified medical professionals in accordance with the PA education.
- Team-based practice is the hallmark of the PA profession and will remain so.

Washington needs PAs to assure access to care

- PAs can help address the physician shortage in rural and underserved areas.
- Under current legislative restrictions, PAs may not provide the full scope of care they are trained to practice since PAs are encumbered by the delegation agreement and scope of practice of their supervising physician.

Help us change the law to promote equal opportunity, access to safe, quality care and enhance public safety

- Remove restrictions on PA practice that obstruct our ability to provide quality care to patients who need it, including, but not limited to, numerical limits, state mandated supervision, and delegation agreements.

\(^{1}\)AAPA 2017 Survey conducted by the Joint Task Force on the Future of PA Practice. May 2017