



PA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
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PAEAonline.org • 703-548-5538

April 12, 2023

The Honorable Sam Harless
Chair
Select Committee on Health Care Reform
Texas House of Representatives

The Honorable Donna Howard
Vice Chair
Select Committee on Health Care Reform
Texas House of Representatives

Dear Chair Harless and Vice Chair Howard:

On behalf of the PA Education Association (PAEA), the national organization representing all 303 accredited PA programs in the United States including 12 programs in Texas, we are writing to express the Association's opposition to HB 2551. This legislation, while well-intended, would compromise the traditional, evidence-based pathway to entry for the PA profession and thereby threaten the quality of care delivered to Texas patients. As such, we urge you to oppose its enactment.

In an attempt to address growing health workforce shortages, HB 2551 would allow medical school graduates that have not completed the typical residency program pathway for unrestricted practice as a physician to become licensed as a PA if they fail to meet alternative physician licensure requirements described in the bill. This approach disregards both the differences between physician and PA education and the initial certification and certification maintenance procedures required of PAs.

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To become licensed as a PA, students are required to complete a rigorous master's level curriculum that consists of both classroom-based and clinical education on a full-time basis over a period of, on average, 27 months. Following completion of their program, students are then required to pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) prior to being eligible for state licensure. To ensure ongoing education and quality of care, PAs then must complete 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years and recertify every ten years.

HB 2551 fails to recognize the integrity of PA education by allowing associate physicians to become licensed as PAs when they have failed the alternate pathway in the bill to become a physician, failed to complete an accredited PA program, and failed to pass the PANCE. This would result in patient confusion as to the education received by their health care provider as well as undermine the long-proven pathway for preparing PAs equipped to provide high-quality care. For these reasons, PAEA opposes this bill and instead urges you to support alternative measures to invest in PA programs in the state to effectively address workforce challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Association's perspective on the legislation. We welcome further engagement to promote the development of the PA workforce to ensure all Texans have access to needed care. Should you have specific questions or if you would like additional information, please contact Senior Director of Government Relations Tyler Smith at 703-667-4356 or tsmith@PAEAonline.org.

Sincerely,

Linda Sekhon

Linda Sekhon, DHSc, PA-C
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara F. Fletcher".

Sara Fletcher, PhD
Chief Executive Officer