



**For Immediate Release  
February 5, 2024**

**Contact:  
Dan Shomon  
Cell 773-339-0476 or  
[danflak@aol.com](mailto:danflak@aol.com)**

**Crespo, Gillespie sponsor “PAs+Care” licensing reform legislation to improve patient access to medical professionals**

**SPRINGFIELD, IL** – State Representative Fred Crespo, D-Hoffman Estates, and State Senator Ann Gillespie, D-Arlington Heights, have introduced legislation that would modernize physician assistant (PA) practice laws and increase access to care for patients across the state.

Under current law, many of the 4,400 PAs in Illinois must have an overly bureaucratic collaborative relationship with a physician before they can provide care regardless of the PA’s education, training, experience, and their medical facility rules. This outdated regulation puts unnecessary burdens on the healthcare workforce, blocking medical teams from providing care that is needed to increase accessibility for all Illinoisans.

The new legislation does not allow independent practice for PAs since it does not allow physician assistants to directly bill for services or set up their own corporation.

"Over 3 million Illinois residents live in federally designated health professional shortage areas and routinely wait weeks or sometimes months to see a health care provider," said Timothy Kinsey, PA-C, President of the Illinois Academy of PAs. "Delays in PA licensing, driven by outdated collaborative agreement requirements, significantly contribute to this crisis. Updating the PA Practice Act and allowing PAs to practice to the extent of their training, education, and experience as part of the healthcare team will improve patient access to high-quality care in Illinois."

House Bill 4637 and Senate Bill 3114 would permit PAs who have more than 2,000 clinical hours of experience to practice without having state paperwork linking them to a physician but still meeting their medical group’s rules and regulations. After which, PAs would continue to provide high-quality care to patients in a team-based setting. PAs with fewer than 2,000 clinical hours would still be required to have a state-approved relationship with a collaborating physician.

Patient safety will not be affected by the new legislation, Kinsey said, citing a newly released study from the American Academy of Physician Assistants. The study found

"no statistically significant difference in rates of medical malpractice claims for PAs between states" that have more or less bureaucratic regulations.

The bill introduction comes on the heels of a new Harris Poll report that found 38% of Illinois patients give the current healthcare system a failing grade -- much higher than the national average (26%).

"Physician assistants are crucial members of medical teams that treat patients," said Representative Crespo, whose wife is a nurse. "We are losing PAs to other states and increasing our state's health care shortage with unnecessary bureaucratic rules and regulations. This situation must change, and laws must be modernized."

The survey, which was commissioned by the American Academy of Physician Assistants, also found that Illinois patients wait on average 4.3 weeks for a medical appointment, longer than the national average of 3.9 weeks.

One solution to alleviating long wait times is fully utilizing the 4,400 PAs in the state. Of the patients polled, 92% said having a PA on staff makes it easier to obtain a medical appointment, and 90% of Illinois patients support updating PA practice laws to allow the state to fully utilize the healthcare workforce.

"PAs are already governed by their medical facility bylaws and credentialing requirements and their responsibilities are laid out in their contracts with their health care organization," said Senator Gillespie. "A peer-reviewed study last year from Southern Illinois University School of Medicine found that PAs are not practicing to the level of their education and training. This legislation simply removes bureaucratic requirements at a time when the State of Illinois has been mandated to improve its medical regulatory process due to licensing delays."

-end-