

Dear Representative Crespo and Senator Gillespie:

As a physician, I understand the critical issue of healthcare access in Illinois. The US Department of Health and Human Services reports that Illinois ranks third in the nation for Medically Underserved Areas (1). Over 3.6 million Illinois residents live in health professional shortage areas (2), and the percentage of adults over 18 without a personal healthcare provider surpasses the national average (3).

This access crisis jeopardizes our state's health and impacts our communities' well-being. We must expand access to well-trained Physician Assistants (PAs) to address this challenge. Over 4,400 PAs across Illinois work alongside healthcare teams in various specialties and settings, often managing their own patient panels. A PA sees approximately 60 patients weekly, and studies show that they provide consistently high-quality care (4,5,6). However, outdated state laws in Illinois restrict PAs from practicing to their full capabilities and limit patient access to care.

Presently, PAs can only practice or prescribe medication with a formal agreement with a physician, creating unnecessary administrative hurdles. These policies lag behind PA practice law modernizations in other states.

As a physician, I appreciate the importance of team-based care, where each team member's skills are fully utilized. State mandates that impede PAs from treating patients or prescribing medications hinder effective healthcare delivery. It's time to update Illinois's practice laws to allow PAs to collaborate seamlessly with physicians and healthcare providers, eliminating the need for formal agreements and delegated prescriptive authority. This change will benefit all stakeholders.

As an Illinois physician and a healthcare access advocate, I strongly urge your colleague's support for HB 4637 and SB 3114. These changes are essential to improving healthcare access for Illinois patients.

Sincerely,

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1. <https://data.hrsa.gov/topics/health-workforce/shortage-areas>
 2. Bureau of Health Workforce, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas Statistics: Designated HPSA Quarterly Summary, as of September 30, 2022
 3. KFF analysis of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s 2013-2022 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).
 4. Virani SS, Maddox TM, Chan PS, et al. Provider type and quality of outpatient cardiovascular disease care. *J Am Coll Cardiol.* 2015;66(16):1803-12.
 5. Xing J, Mukamel DB, Temkin-Greener H. Hospitalizations of nursing home residents in the last year of life: nursing home characteristics and variation in potentially avoidable hospitalizations. *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2013;61(11):1900-8.
 6. Kurtzman E, Barnow B. A comparison of nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and primary care physicians' patterns of practice and quality of care in health centers. *Med Care.* 2017;55(1):615-2

Tips for completing the Physician Support Letter:

- Have the physician print and sign their name at the bottom of the letter and include the name of the town where they live. This helps to direct their letter to the representative or senator for their district.
- Once the letter is signed, you may return the letter by scanning or taking a clear picture of the letter with your phone, and sending it by email to letters@PAsCARE.org