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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION
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October 24, 2007

Charles P. Fasano, D.O.
Chairman, Osteopathic Board of Medicine
P.O. Box 2649,
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649

Dear Dr. Fasano:

I am writing to indicate my strong support for the proposed changes to the prescribing regulations for osteopathic physicians (DOs) who supervise physician assistants (PAs). As Vice President for Graduate Programs at PCOM, I know that our physician assistant graduates deserve consistency in prescribing privileges, regardless of the medical degree possessed by their supervising physician. Whether they are ultimately supervised by a DO or by an MD, all PAs receive the same training. Physician assistants have been safely prescribing under the supervision of allopathic physicians (MDs) for years, always working under physician supervision to ensure patient safety.

Equalizing the regulations under both osteopathic and allopathic practice acts will benefit the health of the people the Commonwealth. Our osteopathic medical graduates will not need to relocate to other states in order to fully utilize physician assistants in their practices. Non-physician health professionals, whether they are PA's, nurses or other therapists, have been recognized as important contributors to our health care system. Equity in the prescribing regulations will encourage physician assistants to stay and practice after graduation in Pennsylvania.

Access to care will be improved, because PAs with prescriptive authority will immediately increase in value to DOs, meaning more practices may hire a PA. Greater utilization of PAs will in turn improve access to care by reducing waiting times, increasing availability of appointments, and allowing the osteopathic physician to focus on more complicated patient concerns.

Also, as an advocate for the osteopathic profession, I believe the proposed regulation is essential – for DO's to assert the same rights and privileges as MD's. This disparity has long been a source of professional embarrassment for many osteopathic physicians. As professional equals, osteopathic physicians must enjoy the same ability to delegate prescriptive authority to their physician assistants as their MD colleagues.

On a practical level, it is in the best interest of the osteopathic profession to support the new regulation, as hospitals and practices will be more likely to hire osteopathic physicians if they are able to supervise PAs with delegated prescriptive authority.

It is my hope that the new regulation allowing delegated prescriptive authority to DO-supervised physician assistants will be adopted, and I urge your support of this measure. It makes sense not only for Pennsylvania's health professions students and graduates, but also for their patients.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert G. Cuzzolino, Ed.D." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Robert G. Cuzzolino, Ed.D.
Vice President for Graduate Programs and Planning

cc Governor Edward G. Rendell
Basil L. Merenda, Commissioner, Bureau of Professional & Occupational Affairs