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 Rachel A. Meirose, MPAS, PA-C • Edward T. Schuurman, MS, PA-C

October 29, 2007

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Basil L. Merenda
 Commissioner, Bureau of Professional & Occupational Affairs
 P.O. Box 2649,
 Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649

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Dear Mr. Merenda,

I recently learned that legislation was being presented regarding the ability of Osteopathic Physicians and Physician Assistants in the State of Pennsylvania. As I am sure you are aware, Pennsylvania is the only state that differentiates how PAs can practice under osteopathic versus allopathic physicians. It is also the only state that does not allow PAs to prescribe under osteopathic physicians.

Physician assistants have been practicing for years under allopathic physicians in a dependent relationship that can be carefully orchestrated to fit the environment where the practitioners work. We are striving to create more opportunities for PAs and DOs to have this type of relationship and changing these regulations can help facilitate that.

I recently graduated from PA school in this state and, having done rotations across the United States, I knew that I wanted to work on the East Coast, preferably in a rural environment. I hoped to stay in the state because of the wonderful physicians I made and connections I made through the Pennsylvania Society of Physician Assistants. My search for a job was complicated by the separate regulations regarding osteopathic and allopathic physicians. I was not hired for several jobs as they needed someone with prescribing privileges no matter which physician was in the office. And Emergency Department work was just as complicated, as some days I would have been forced to stop prescribing mid-shift if the attending physician changed.

I was about to take a job in another state when a rural health clinic with a practice of both allopathic and osteopathic physicians offered me a job. Luckily there is always an allopathic physician on hand, so I do not have to 'forget' how to write prescriptions on certain days of the week. All the physicians in the office have been very supportive of PAs, having employed them since they opened the practice in the 1980's. They are also very excited about possibility of having the same regulations regarding PAs and prescribing rights, as they would be able to split up supervising rights and would not have to be concerned about who is in the office on which nights.

I sincerely hope that you will endorse these regulation changes. The changes proposed will help patients' access to quality health care. And they will help in strengthening professional relationships between your colleagues and mine. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Deanna L. Bridge

Deanna L. Bridge, MPAS, PA-C
 Physician Assistant,
 Mont Alto Family Practice