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

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Dr. Fasano:

Physician Assistants (PAs) are health professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. Training is the same regardless of whether the supervising physician is an M.D. or a D.O.

Within the physician/PA relationship, physician assistants exercise autonomy in medical decision making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services. State laws regulating physician assistants have expanded access to physician services provided by PAs, including the authority to prescribe in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Guam. This enables the PA to function in the fullest capacity as possible as a Physician Assistant. The responsibilities of a physician assistant depend on the practice setting, education, and experience of the PA, and on the state laws and regulations. No matter where PAs are employed, they provide quality medical care. Physician assistants can take medical histories, perform physical exams, order and interpret laboratory tests, diagnose and treat illnesses, counsel patients, assist in surgery, and set fractures.

PAs are currently able to prescribe under the supervision of an M.D. and have been for over 10 years. However, without being able to prescribe under the supervision of a D.O., a physician assistant is restricted to less effective care for patients. The time that is spent on tracking down a D.O. to sign a prescription can instead be spent with the patient resulting in more efficient and thorough care, less waiting time for patients, and the physician/PA team is able to provide more effective healthcare to all patients under their care.

The fact that a PA cannot write prescriptions under the supervision of a D.O. places a negative light on the entire D.O. profession. It suggests that they are not 'as good as' an M.D. since a D.O. is not given the same responsibility as an M.D. to be capable to oversee what a PA is prescribing. Perceptions such as this can be very detrimental and difficult to overcome. Therefore, it is requested that this limitation be removed to enable PAs and their supervising physicians to perform to their utmost abilities to provide the best possible care to their patients.

Sincerely,

Amanda Moschgat, PA-S
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