



Pennsylvania Rural Health Association

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November 19, 2007

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

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 INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
 BOARD OF PHYSICIANS

Dear Dr. Fasano,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Rural Health Association I am writing in support of the proposed Osteopathic Prescribing regulatory changes for Physician Assistants that was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on October 20th, 2007. These proposed changes will lead to less confusion among health care providers, the public, and practicing Physician Assistants if the wording remains exactly as the current allopathic regulations.

Physician Assistants are crucial to rural healthcare delivery and have been safely prescribing under the allopathic regulations for years. Osteopathic physicians should be given the same opportunity to better serve rural Pennsylvania citizens by utilizing Physician Assistants to the full extent of their education. Once these barriers are removed osteopathic physicians will be more likely to hire Physician Assistants and thus extend the services they provide to include more patients from rural and often medically underserved areas. It is anticipated that removing these barriers will facilitate hospitals hiring more Osteopathic physicians because they will now be able to delegate prescribing authority in settings that utilize PA services. The regulations enable the individual physician to decide whether his/her PA will prescribe and also what drugs they will be permitted to prescribe.

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Rural communities within the Commonwealth suffer from a disproportionately low share of primary care providers. Projections are that these numbers will continue to decline as we are projected to lose approximately 40% of our primary care workforce due to retirement over the next ten years. It is imperative that the legislature begin to make decisions that will assure rural citizens have access to primary care services. These regulatory changes will go a long way to make that possible.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Respectfully,



Walter Eisenhauer, M.Ed, MMSc, PA-C
President
Pennsylvania Rural Health Association

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

