



NORTH CAROLINA
Academy of Physician Assistants

North Carolina



Medical Society
Leadership in Medicine

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Optimizing Team-Based Care by Modernizing Practice Level Decision Making

RALEIGH, NC – In response to changes within the health care environment, the North Carolina Academy of Physician Assistants (NCAPA) and the North Carolina Medical Society (NCMS) are proud to announce the introduction of SB 345. This proposed legislation would update laws and regulations that no longer match current practice and health care delivery.

The new legislation would ensure Physician Assistants (PAs) are regulated and licensed by the North Carolina Medical Board and differentiates the requirements between early-career and experienced PAs. It also better reflects the team-based environments in which the vast majority of PAs work.

“We want North Carolina to remain the best place for PAs to practice and are committed to working with our physician colleagues,” said Elyse Watkins, DHSc, PA-C, president of NCAPA. “SB 345 provides a path to a comprehensive team-based care system that we call OTP, Optimal Team Practice, which allows PAs to work to the top of our training and education while reducing administrative barriers to care and improving flexibility throughout the practice.”

The proposed legislation is the result of a lengthy and collaborative process. The NCMS, which has long welcomed PA members, convened a Medical Team Task Force several years ago. The task force, which was comprised of a variety of medical specialties, worked with the NCAPA to develop a proposal focused on the idea of optimal team practice. The ultimate goal is to better recognize the reality of how physicians and PAs work together as a team to provide the highest quality care to patients.

“Our task force studied and debated how best to formalize the relationship we have with our PA team members,” said NCMS President Philip Brown, Jr., MD. “The NCMS is pleased that this proposal recognizes PAs as an integral part of the health care team.”

(more)

North Carolina is the birthplace of the PA profession and home to 11 PA programs. There are over 7,500 PAs practicing across North Carolina, working in a variety of medical specialties and practice environments. Collaboration between physicians and PAs remains a critical element of this legislation. OTP moves North Carolina to practice-level decision making that ultimately improves outcomes for patients.

The three primary sponsors of SB 345 are Sen. Jim Perry (R-Lenoir), Sen. Michael Lee (R-New Hanover) and Sen. Todd Johnson (R-Union).

“This legislation increases PA flexibility and will help ensure that patients are seen in the right setting, by the right provider, at the right time – which can reduce the overall cost of health care,” said Sen. Perry.

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About NCAPA: The North Carolina Academy of Physician Assistants is the voice of PAs in North Carolina and provides innovative solutions to empower its members to enhance their careers. Through our collective efforts, PAs are recognized as vital resource for the treatment of patients in North Carolina. NCAPA membership includes full- and part-time practicing PAs, retired PAs, PA educators, PA students, as well as NPs and others interested in supporting the PA profession.

About the North Carolina Medical Society: The North Carolina Medical Society is the oldest professional member organization in North Carolina, representing physicians and physician assistants who practice in the state. Founded in 1849, the Society seeks to provide leadership in medicine by uniting, serving and representing physicians and their health care teams to enhance the health of North Carolinians.