

WASHINGTON STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: B-5
(A-20)

Subject: Support Equal Employment of Physician Assistants

Introduced by: Linda Dale, DHEd, PA-C, Delegate
Washington Academy of Physician Assistants

Referred to: Reference Committee B

1 WHEREAS, WSMA has supported the physician assistant profession and the state organization,
2 Washington Academy of Physician Assistants (WAPA) for over 50 years. WSMA jointly
3 sponsored the establishment of the University of Washington's PA program, "The MEDEX
4 Demonstration Project" in 1968. The WSMA sponsored the amendment of the Washington State
5 Medical Practice Act in 1971 to allow physician assistants to practice medicine with the
6 supervision of a licensed physician; and

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8 WHEREAS, both WSMA and WAPA believe the practice of medicine to be complex and
9 requires physician participation and collaboration. This collaboration between professions is
10 demonstrated by WSMA welcoming physician assistants as members and includes a WAPA
11 delegate in the House of Delegates who may vote on resolutions presented; and

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13 WHEREAS, both WSMA and WAPA believe the complexity of medicine requires a team
14 approach to patient care which applies to all professions and all advanced practice providers, not
15 just physician assistants; and

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17 WHEREAS, the recent passage of HB 2378-S (PA Modernization Bill) was intended to help
18 increase access to care by reducing barriers to employment of physician assistants and to
19 optimize the manner in which physician assistants deliver quality medical care. The repository
20 of the delegation agreement was moved to the local practice site to facilitate the physician
21 assistants and the clinic site's ability to more rapidly respond to the rapidly changing medical
22 needs. This also allows physician assistants to practice to the extent of their education and
23 experience as it pertains to that particular practice site; and

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25 WHEREAS, supervision does not require direct supervision of the physician assistant's
26 performance, nor require cosigning of charts. The amount of supervision required for that
27 particular physician assistant within that particular practice site should be determined at the site
28 through an established pattern of medical competence decided upon by the physician and the
29 physician assistant and adjusted for practice experience; and

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31 WHEREAS, the language in the physician assistant practice laws calling out for supervision of
32 a physician assistant has resulted in a hiring bias against physician assistants when advance
33 practice providers are being sought. Examples illustrate that in some institutions, nurse
34 practitioners are being considered preferentially for positions secondary to an interpretation of
35 the "supervision requirement" even when more experienced physician assistants also applied;
36 and

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38 WHEREAS, the WSMA HOD in 2017 passed a resolution to continue to work in collaboration
39 with the Washington Academy of Physician Assistants to identify, define, analyze, and propose
40 solutions to address barriers to the use of physician assistants at the top of their license to
41 promote patient access to care in Washington State. It was also resolved that the WSMA educate

