



April 3, 2025

RE: LD 1166 - An Act to Change the Professional Title and Identification of Physician Assistants to Physician Associates

Dear Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services,

The American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) is the national professional society for PAs (physician associates/physician assistants) representing a profession of more than 178,700 PAs across all medical and surgical specialties in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, and the uniformed services. On behalf of AAPA and the more than 1,050 Maine licensed PAs, I am writing to express our strong support for LD 1166, which would update the title of the profession in Maine from “physician assistant” to “physician associate.”

PAs are licensed clinicians who practice medicine in every specialty and setting. Trusted, rigorously educated, and trained at the master’s degree level, PAs are dedicated to expanding access to care and transforming health and wellness through patient-centered, team-based medical practice. Often serving as the patient’s principal healthcare provider, PAs perform physical examinations, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret lab tests, prescribe medications, and perform medical procedures. Despite the essential role PAs play in patient care, the term “assistant” is outdated and misleading. It does not accurately reflect the responsibilities and contributions of PAs to the healthcare system. Too often, patients misunderstand the scope of PA practice, unfortunately assuming that PAs only “assist” physicians, when in reality they deliver comprehensive, high-quality medical care. Changing the profession’s title addresses this common misperception and will help clarify the critical contribution PAs make to the healthcare system. In addition, it more distinctly articulates the role and responsibilities of PAs while reaffirming our commitment to team-based patient care.

Given the evolving role of the PA profession, the realities of the healthcare environment, and the results of an extensive research initiative, AAPA’s House of Delegates passed a resolution affirming “physician associate” as the official title of the profession in 2021. This new title better conveys the work PAs do, provides clarity for patients, and reinforces the collaborative nature of PA practice. Since that time, six PA programs, 14 state constituent organizations<sup>1</sup>, including the Maine Academy of Physician Associates (MEAPA), and 12 specialty organizations have updated their names to reflect this title change. In 2024, Oregon became the first state to officially update its laws and regulations to reflect the new title.

This legislation does not alter PA scope of practice, which remains defined by state law, employer policies, and patient needs and is based on the PA’s medical education, training, and experience. Furthermore, PAs will continue to practice in a team-based model, where they collaborate with their

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<sup>1</sup> Constituent organizations (COs) are independent organizations affiliated with AAPA. Currently, AAPA has 58 chapters representing the 50 states, DC, the US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, five federal services, as well as 27 specialty organizations, 14 caucuses, and 26 special interest groups. They provide their members with locally based CME, networking opportunities, timely information, and advocacy and job resources.

health care colleagues to deliver patient care and optimize patient outcomes. This legislation simply ensures that the title accurately conveys the role of PAs in modern healthcare.

AAPA is committed to ensuring that patients, providers, and the public fully understand the education, training, and expertise of PAs. Updating the PA title through LD 1166 is a key step in achieving this goal. We are thankful that Maine is a leader in modernizing PA practice laws and hope that the state will build on this progress by enacting title change legislation. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on this bill and look forward to collaborating further. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Meghan Pudeler, AAPA's Director of State Advocacy & Outreach, at [mpudeler@aapa.org](mailto:mpudeler@aapa.org)

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Prevelige, PA-C". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jason Prevelige, DMSc, MBA, PA-C, DFAAPA  
President and Chair, Board of Directors, AAPA