



April 6, 2015

To: Senate Health Care Committee
From: Oregon Society of Physician Assistants
RE: **Support for SB 905**

OSPA Urges Passage of SB 905

The Oregon Society of Physician Assistants (OSPA) seeks to promote quality, cost effective, and accessible health care; to support the professional and personal development of Physician Assistants (PAs); and to advance the PA profession as well as the collaborative PA/physician approach to health care. PAs are advanced degree holders who practice medicine collaboratively with physicians, and are designated primary care providers (PCPs) alongside physicians and nurse practitioners in today's medical community.

OSPA supports Senate Bill 905, which would add a single PA to the composition of the Oregon Medical Board (OMB). In doing so, the OSPA also anticipates the dissolution of the current Physician Assistant Committee (PAC) of the OMB once a representative seat on the board is established.

Adding a PA to the OMB is the right thing to do.

Oregon's regulatory boards exist to benefit the public by regulating professional practice. The overwhelming majority of boards are populated by the very professionals they regulate. This practice ensures that those with the most intimate knowledge, experience, and skills are monitoring the licensees, while also helping ensure that the perspective and voice of licensees is not absent from the equation.

There are over 1,500 PAs licensed in Oregon, without representation on their regulatory board. The OMB currently has 12 members – 7 MDs (representing approx. 15,000 physicians), 2 DOs (representing approx. 1300 physicians), 1 podiatrist (representing approx. 200 podiatrists), and 2 members of the public.

Historically, the addition of members to boards has been successful and led to better function. Doctors of Podiatry integrated smoothly into OMB in 2005 and have held successful leadership roles despite their different professional scope. OMB's requirement that board members are leaders who have demonstrated tenure of practice (greater than 5 years) helps ensure that.

SB 905 abolishes the Physician Assistant Committee (PAC), which is an advisory committee comprising three PAs and a physician representative who also sits on the

Board. The PAC's recommendations to the Board are non-binding. Before 2011, the PAC reviewed all PA license applications and practice descriptions. SB 224 (2011) modernized the PA licensing laws, which had the effect of reducing the PAC's duties.

There is no better time to add a PA to OMB than now.

PAs have been licensed by OMB for decades. The number of licensed PAs in Oregon has doubled since 2007, and Physician Assistants are the second-fastest growing medical profession in the state.

OMB is seeking semi-independence through SB 279, already passed by this committee. There is a public interest in making its board membership reflect the professions it oversees, as those professions become partners in oversight.

This is the right time to ensure that PAs, who provide health care to Oregonians in all regions of the State, are represented with a voice on the board that regulates their practice.

OSPA urges you to support SB 905.