

Submitter: Jonathan Clemens  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: SB891

As a 2012 graduate of Pacific University's Physician Assistant program, with strong family ties to my neighboring state of Oregon, I write to oppose SB 891.

First, PAs do not support this role. The American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA), our national organization, supports PAs discussing end of life options, but not acting as decision makers.(i)

Second, PAs are not trained to do what this bill requires. PA education standards(ii) specify classroom instruction in “palliative and end-of-life care” and “Death, dying, and loss” but nothing on patient decision making capacity, intractable suffering, or how long a patient will live. None of these topics are mandatory in PA students’ clinical training, and our board exams(iii) do not cover these topics. The majority of PAs have no exposure to end of life decision making beyond a single classroom lecture. Only one in one thousand PAs (0.1%) practices hospice and palliative medicine.(iv) This bill contains no requirement for PAs to be trained in any of these topics before acting as decision makers.

Third, PAs are not independent clinicians. Because PAs work alongside physicians, we know society expects the life and death decisions be made by our physician colleagues. This bill does not require a PA consult his or her supervising physician.

Finally, this bill contains no language to prevent economic coercion of PAs to perform Death With Dignity duties, and brand-new PAs with student loan debt who should never be making these decisions are most at risk for economic coercion.

If this bill is passed, PAs may be economically compelled to rubber-stamp decisions outside our professional standards, outside of our practice agreements, and for which we have not been trained.

Jonathan Clemens, PA-C

- i. The American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) 2022-23 policy manual, p. 186. <https://www.aapa.org/download/104320/>
- ii. The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant current standards <https://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/standards-of-accreditation/>
- iii. The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants develops and administers these tests. <https://www.nccpa.net/become-certified/pance-blueprint/>
- iv. Statistical Profile of Certified PAs, 2021 Annual Report, p. 17.

<https://www.nccpa.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2021StatProfileofCertifiedPAs-A-3.2.pdf>